NEWS / A2

Defensor forms new movement to instill Pinoy sense of brotherhood

NEWS / A2

CHEd's committee members on nursing resign en masse

METRO/ A19

9-year-old masterminds theft of P50,000 worth of truck spare parts

SAT. SPECIAL / A3-1

Q & A with Ryan for sneak preview of 'Philippine Idol'

'Palace timed Lim video release for CBCP meet'

By Michael Lim Ubac
and Christian V. Esguerra

THE VIDEOTAPE OF BRIG. GEN. DANILO LIM was released ahead of the two-day plenary assembly of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, which starts today, as part of Malacañang's strategy, two opposition lawmakers said yesterday.

PALACE/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Saturday, July 8, 2006 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 210 P18 website: www.inq7.net

GMA: Ceasefire now before peace talks

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO YESTERday ruled out the resumption of peace talks with communist rebels unless they agreed to an immediate ceasefire nationwide.

"The Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army (CPP-NPA) has shut the door to peace by carrying out violence and aggression against the people while making

GMA/ A6

Rebel 'powerhouse' falls

6 Magdalo officers, 2 civilians seized in QC

By Luige A. del Puerto
and Dona Pazzibugan

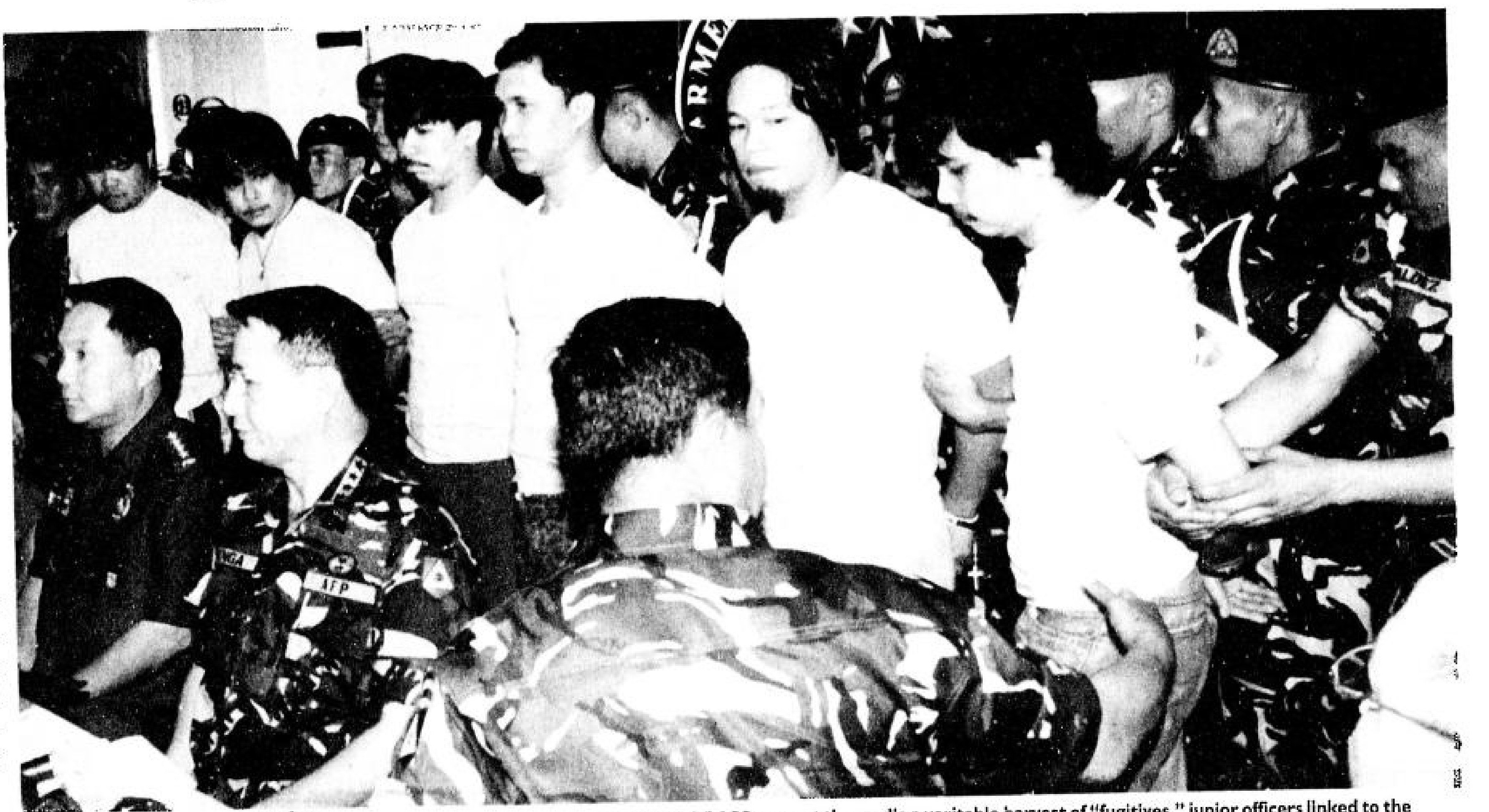
THE RAIDERS, ALL wearing bullet-proof vests, struck so swiftly at dawn that it was over in two minutes. Cornered, some of the rebel soldiers—among the country's most wanted fugitives—tried to escape by jumping over a wall only to find other military and police raiders on the other side waiting for them.

In a well-planned attack, police and military agents yesterday captured six Magdalo officers and two civilians, and seized guns, explosives and papers which officials said raised suspicions they might be plotting to bomb the Batasang Pambansa when President Macapagal-Arroyo delivers her State of the Nation Address on July 24.

"These are the powerhouse of the Magdalo group. They are the people going the rounds, the people known for destabilization," newly installed national police chief Deputy Director General Oscar Calderon said.

The successful operation would seem to indicate Ms Arroyo's firm control of two very powerful institutions in the country—the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces.

REBEL/ A8



THE TOP BRASS present the media a veritable harvest of "fugitives," junior officers linked to the Oakwood mutiny in 2003. They are from left, 1Lt. Sonny Sarmiento, 1Lt. Nathaniel Rabonza, 1Lt. Angelbert Gay, Navy Lt. Kiram Sadava, 1Lt. Patricio Bumidang, 2Lt. Aldrin Baldonado. Front row (from left) PNP chief Oscar Calderon, AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga; Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon.

REM ZAMORA

RAFFY LERMA

THE "POWERHOUSE," police call this residence at No. 34 Adler St., Filinvest 2, Quezon City, where key Magdalo members were arrested in a dawn raid on Friday.

Strike 3 for lawyer arrested with 'fugitives'

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE LAWYER ARRESTED WITH six Magdalo soldiers yesterday in Quezon City had been in a similar tight fix before—not just once but three times.

Two ranking police officers said the arrest of Christopher "Kit" Belmonte further confirmed the existence of a leftist-rightist conspiracy to topple the government.

Belmonte had been caught three times during the last nine years in the company of men from the extreme ends of the political spectrum.

"The indication is that he appears to be the bridge between these two groups," said Director Jesus Versoza, head of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group.

Belmonte was allegedly acting as "driver and bodyguard" of rebel leader Nilo de la Cruz when the pair were arrested in Marilao, Bulacan, in October 1997.

STRIKE 3/ A8

Forex reserves hit record $21B in June

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE COUNTRY'S GROSS INTERnational reserves (GIR) reached the $21-billion mark for the first time in June despite pressures from public sector debt servicing and slower foreign inflows to emerging markets like the Philippines.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. reported yesterday that the Philippines' GIR climbed to an all-time high of $21.15 billion at end-June from $20.95 billion at end-May.

Tetangco attributed the higher GIR level to the BSP's foreign exchange operations, income from investments abroad, deposits by the national government of proceeds from project loans and release of collateral from the redemption of Brady Bonds in May.

The Philippine government bought back $411 million or 53 percent of the outstanding amount of Brady Bonds—a bitter reminder of the country's debt crisis years.

BSP sources earlier estimated that $300 million worth of collaterals consisting of zero-coupon US Treasury notes had been freed up in June following the retirement of the bonds.

Taking advantage of the sharp peso appreciation, the Philippine government replicated the debt management tack pursued by Latin American countries that had bounced back from their fiscal woes like Brazil, Mexico and Colombia by buying back the bulk of the remaining Brady

FOREX/ A10

In this school, lessons spill into toilet

AT THE OVERCROWDED COMmonwealth Elementary School in Quezon City, class size isn't the only issue.

With some 11,900 students enrolled this year alone, teachers struggle to even house the students, cramming them into every available space, including corridors, bathrooms and garages.

Commonwealth Elementary now has seven buildings with 85 classrooms. These include a bathroom that was converted into a classroom and even lessons being held in corridors.

Ventilation is poor in some rooms and in others, the desks are so close to the windows that the kids get soaked when it rains.

Rooms are filled to bursting, with some classes having more than 70 students. In some cases, three kids share a single desk. Five pupils share a single textbook.

Despite being sandwiched between the Payatas dump site and one of the city's largest shantytowns, this public elementary school is one of the world's most populous grade schools.

The dire situation here has become symbolic of the Philippines' educational system as a whole—too few resources are being used to educate too many students in too little time.

The Department of Education

IN THIS/ A4

JOAN BONDOC

EDUCATION GOES TO POT. The toilet of the Commonwealth Elem. School in QC with a student population of 11,900 was converted into a classroom.

'Nicole' fails to show up, suffers a breakdown

By Volt Contreras

HER FIRST DAY AT THE STAND on Thursday was apparently too traumatic for "Nicole."

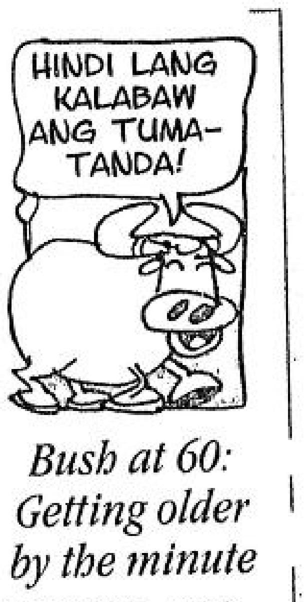
The Filipino complainant in the Subic rape case did not show up for yesterday's scheduled continuation of her testimony, forcing the prosecution to seek a postponement of the hearing.

According to her lawyers and her therapist, Nicole was actually prepared to go to the Makati Regional Trial Court but suffered a "breakdown" about an hour before the 1 p.m. proceedings.

They reported her condition to Judge Benjamin Pozon shortly after he banged the gavel and recited an opening prayer.

The defense did not object to the motion for postponement made by Senior State Prosecutor

NICOLE/ A10



HINDI LANG KALABAW ANG TUMA-TANDA!

Bush at 60: Getting older by the minute

WASHINGTON—AFTER months of fretting about getting older, President George W. Bush turned 60 on Thursday.

Bush celebrated his birthday with friends on Tuesday at a White House party on Independence Day and there were not supposed to be any festivities on Thursday. Still, the occasion was expected to be noted in a

BUSH/ A10

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SATURDAY, JULY 8, 2006
Second FRONTPAGE
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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Luzon and Western Visayas will experience occasional monsoon rains becoming frequent rains over Western Luzon which may trigger flashfloods and landslides. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/07/07/06 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Rains	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Rains	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Rains	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Partly Cloudy

CHEd blamed for nursing mess

Committee members resign en masse

By Alcuin Papa

THE QUALITY OF NURSING GRADUATES AND OF nursing education has dropped because the Commission on Higher Education has surrendered to business and political interests.

This claim was made by the CHEd's Technical Committee on Nursing Education (TCNE), which was formed to give advice to the commission, and whose members resigned en masse yesterday.

In their resignation letter, the committee members said the CHEd "lacks the will to assure quality nursing education."

"We believe that the TCNE and CHEd are divided in their positions on the different nursing education quality issues. We feel that we no longer have the support of the CHEd commissioners and some regional directors in upholding the quality of Philippine nursing education, which is our primordial mission," they said.

Vested interests

They added that instead of acting on their recommendations, CHEd had "buckled down to pressure from vested political and economic interests, sacrificing quality for mediocrity and business interests."

Asked to comment, CHEd Chair Carlito Puno said: "I deny that. We in the commission told them that we must be careful with our decisions. *Huwag sugod nang sugod* (Let us not rush) because these kinds of decisions are specific to a class and have legal implications."

Later, however, Puno admitted that the issue had "political, economic and legal implications [that] should [be considered]."

Beset by problems

The TCNE is chaired by Marilyn E. Lorenzo, director of the Institute of Health Policy and Development Studies.

Its members are Carmelita C. Divinagracia, dean of the University of the East-Ramon Magsaysay Medical Center College of Nursing; Remedios L. Fernandez of the Board of Nursing; Amelia Rosales, chief of nurses at the Makati Medical Center; Zylma Sanchez, formerly with the Philippine Heart Center; Glenda Vargas, dean of the University of Santo Tomas College of Nursing; and Rita Tamse, deputy director for nursing of the Philippine General Hospital.

"Nursing has become one of the most, if not the most, popular courses. But it is beset by … problems. There is a rapid increase in the number of schools but there is a slow deterioration of the quality," Lorenzo told reporters.

As evidence, she said the passing rate in the nursing board exams had hovered below 50 percent for the past few years. She said she expected the result of the last board exam, now mired in a leakage controversy, to be the same.

'Flying deans'

Divinagracia said a survey conducted three years ago revealed a number of unqualified nursing school deans.

She said some were "flying deans," meaning they were serving as deans and or faculty members in more than one school.

"Definitely, this affects the education system of a school," Divinagracia said.

The result is that new graduates fail to gain acceptance in even local hospitals.

There were about 100,000 nursing graduates last year, produced by some 470 nursing schools nationwide.

"There is pressure from school owners for us to bring down standards," Lorenzo said. "You cannot solve a problem with another problem. The solution is to reduce the number of schools, not lower standards."

The TCNE members also said they had recommended, without success, the restoration of the abolished extra year for nursing, making it a five-year course again.

They said this was necessary to make Filipino nurses competitive with their counterparts from India and China.

Puno said it was not only the quality of nursing education that had waned.

"I am the first to admit that the quality of tertiary education has gone down in general, including nursing. This is due to the very poor skills of students in English, science and math," he said.

Puno also said that if there should be blame, part of it should fall on the TCNE members "who had been there for the last four or five years" and were "part of policymaking."

He said resignation was not the way to deal with the problems besetting the system.

"If they want to convince us, they should … present hard facts and statistics and argue with us," Puno said.

We don't have the numbers, opposition leader in House admits

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE OPPOSITION DOESN'T HAVE the numbers to impeach President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Tarlac Rep. Gilbert Teodoro, a stalwart of the Nationalist People's Coalition and a nephew of businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, said, the House minority lacked warm bodies to propel the rehashed impeachment case to the Senate for trial.

"Not all NPC members who signed the impeachment complaint last year will do the same this year," Teodoro told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Last year, eight House members belonging to the NPC wing led by House Minority Leader Francis Escudero, were in the forefront of the opposition's move to unseat Ms Arroyo over allegations she cheated in the 2004 polls.

Escudero was staunchly supported by Reps. Darlene Antonino-Custodio, Rodolfo Plaza, Joseph Santiago, Antonio Serapio, Luis Asistio, Ruy Lopez and Arthur Pingoy.

However, Serapio and Asistio were no-shows when the plenary junked the impeachment case on Sept. 5.

The rest of the 40 NPC members in the House voted with the majority to throw out the three impeachment complaints on a technicality.

Teodoro said he had been informed that Pingoy would no longer join the revived impeachment drive.

Although on paper the House minority is only composed of 28 House members, a total of 51 congressmen subsequently voted to impeach Ms Arroyo, 28 shy of the required 79 signatures.

Politically motivated

Lawyer Romeo Macalintal pointed to the weaknesses of the four impeachment complaints filed last week against Ms Arroyo.

Macalintal is Ms Arroyo's impeachment counsel.

"These cases are politically motivated, have no factual or legal basis, and should be dismissed outright by the House," he said in recent a speech before members of the group "Mahal Ko, Bayan Ko" at the Manila Polo Club in Forbes Park, Makati.

Peggy Vera, one of the group's leaders, said their members were not pro-Arroyo.

They were, however, anti-impeachment because "pursuing another impeachment case against the President would simply worsen the Filipino's economic and political miseries."

Effects of crisis

Vera said the group had been holding forums so members could better understand the implications of the country's continuing political crisis.

She said she hoped politicians could get their act together and begin solving the problems of the country instead of engaging in destructive politics.

"Like a vagrant, these cases have no visible means of legal and factual support," Macalintal said in his speech.

Chavit tells Erap: I'm not behind Joelle

ILOCOS SUR GOV. LUIS "CHAVIT" Singson yesterday denied that he had a hand in the filing of charges against ousted President Joseph Estrada by former beauty queen Joelle Pelaez.

Estrada had claimed that Pelaez was being manipulated by Singson, a former buddy whose "jueteng" exposé led to his impeachment trial and eventual downfall.

According to Singson, Pelaez appears to be smart and knows that for the case to prosper it must be backed up with sufficient hard evidence such as bank records and other official documents.

"With these incontrovertible evidence on hand, Ms Pelaez doesn't need to be manipulated to file charges against a man of Erap's stature and in the process expose herself to harassment and unsavory speculations," Singson said in a statement.

Singson also deplored Estrada's penchant for finger-pointing and blame-throwing to ward off the negative media mileage that Pelaez's complaint has generated.

Asked what message he would like to send to his erstwhile friend, Singson quickly responded, "For a change, come to grips with the truth. Quit acting innocent and accept the fact that reality has finally caught up with you."

Singson also sought to clarify that Estrada's optimism on his acquittal from plunder charges was a little bit premature.

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Defensor launches Madyaas Confederacy, a 'neo-con' group

By Cynthia D. Balana

PRESIDENTIAL CHIEF OF STAFF MICHAEL Defensor launched yesterday a new group that would advocate for peace and promote programs to strengthen the Filipino national identity and love of country.

Called the Madyaas Confederacy, the group was named after the first formal political organization, formed in Panay by 10 Bornean datus who migrated to the Philippines in the early 13th century.

Defensor led the new members in simple oath-taking rites in San Juan. He said the Madyaas symbolized the beginning of Filipino nationhood which his group hopes to revive.

Defensor said that President Macapagal-Arroyo had been informed of the group's formation and that he, along with Agrarian Reform Secretary Nazzer Pangandaman, had asked to be excused from the Cabinet meeting yesterday to lead the Madyaas' launching which coincided with the anniversary of the founding of the Katipunan during the Spanish occupation.

He denied that the group was pro-Arroyo and that it was formed to counter the opposition's impeachment campaign against the President.

"This is not a political group and we do not intend to transform it into a political party. We will register this as an advocacy group. We are a neo-conservative group," Defensor said in an the interview.

Unlike other groups whose political leanings were sometimes ambiguous, he said, Madyaas would make a clear stand on any issue.

Other co-founders of the group are: Former undersecretary Abraham Puruganan, Manila Rep. Miles Roces and Agusan del Sur Gov. Edward Plaza.

Defensor also enumerated the group's 7-point program for action, namely, to advocate for political and economic reforms, to enhance national security, to strengthen democratic institutions, to build a conducive environment for peace, to promote business activities, to build the global Filipino village and to advocate for the revival of national pride.

Former YOU comrade offers to help Danny Lim clear the air

By Cynthia D. Balana

A FORMER LEADER OF THE YOUNG OFFICERS Union (YOU) who took part in the bloody siege of Makati during the 1989 coup attempt yesterday defended beleaguered Scout Ranger Gen. Danilo Lim, saying the latter was only used by interest groups "just like what happened to us in 1989."

Former undersecretary Abraham Purugganan, a former Army colonel, said he sympathized with close friend Lim, adding that he was willing to help Lim clear the air surrounding the failed coup provided that he was cleared by President Macapagal-Arroyo to do so.

Purugganan, who said he had not talked to Lim since last year, said the US Military Academy graduate was a victim of circumstances as well as interest groups, including politicians.

"It's always that way," he said. "We were used and then dropped hastily … hanging on air. Just like what was done to us in the past," he said, referring to his and Lim's experience during the 1989.

Purugganan had said he regretted having allowed himself to be used by vested political interests during the 1989 coup and subsequently severed ties with former Sen. Gregorio Honasan.

Lim, on the other hand, took part in the peace talks that the administration of President Fidel Ramos held with mutinous soldiers and availed himself of amnesty given by Congress for his participation in the coup.

Purugganan attributed Lim's repeat of their "mistakes" to "wrong association" and "wrong information."

"That's your lot if you are a soldier. If you don't manage to see the real situation in the country, you could be influenced and act on wrong information," Purugganan explained.

He added : "Take a close look at the video clip (showing Lim reading an anti-government statement). He doesn't look comfortable with what he's saying. The Danny I know is self-assured. I think if he were the one who prepared the statement he read in the footage, just like what we did in 2001 when we issued a statement about YOU, he would have been very confident about what he was reading. I did not see such confidence in this new video."

Coup plot report

AFTER THREE MONTHS, A MILITARY FACT-finding board yesterday turned in its official report on the Feb. 24 failed coup plot to Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga.

AFP Inspector Rear Admiral Rufino Lopez, who headed the eight-man fact-finding board, handed the 43-page report to Senga at the Army headquarters in Fort Bonifacio.

The Lopez board began its investigation in April, nearly two months after the Scout Rangers, Marines and the Philippine National Police Special Action Force allegedly plotted to withdraw support from President Macapagal-Arroyo during the 20th anniversary of the people power revolt.

A 33-page alleged draft of the report was leaked to the media last Monday.

Lopez refused to discuss the report, saying it was up to Senga to disclose it.

"I will review this. I will study it. I will look at the recommendations. If there is a need for some people to go through court-martial then I will order the conduct of a pre-trial investigation. After that, charges will be filed then the court-martial proceedings will be done," Senga said.

But he stressed: "I am not pressured by anything."

Dona Z. Pazzibugan

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In this public school, lessons spill into toilet

From page A1

estimates that for 2006, the country needed 10,549 new classrooms, 1.22 million desks, 67.03 million textbooks and 12,131 more teachers to deal with the crush.

The Philippines has 87 million people, with the population growing at 1.95 percent a year. Pressure from the Roman Catholic Church, which counts most Filipinos as followers, has hampered efforts to promote birth control.

Ironically while other public schools in the area complain about lack of students, many parents are pressing to have their children enrolled at Commonwealth Elementary because it is near their homes or their place of work—a nearby public market.

On enrollment day in June, many parents came to personally plead that their kids be allowed in despite the overcrowding.

"Look at that classroom with 80 kids in it. What kind of education will your child get there?" one exasperated teacher said.

"But my other children are already enrolled here," the mother pleaded.

School principal Avelina Salvador says most of the children come from the nearby slum where thousands of informal settlers crowd into small shanties made of scrap wood and galvanized iron sheets.

The annual tuition fee at the nearby church-run Claret School for boys is P60,000, equivalent to six months' wages of a typical minimum-wage earner in Manila.

Better off

Commonwealth Elementary is also attractive because it is perceived to be safe—a police station sits nearby—and because some pre-schoolers get free snacks. The children do not have enough money to buy their own food.

For all its problems, it is actually one of the better equipped government-run schools in the country, Salvador says.

It has acquired computers for students' use and even conducts pre-school classes and special education classes for disabled kids as well as "madrasa" classes for Muslim children on Saturdays.

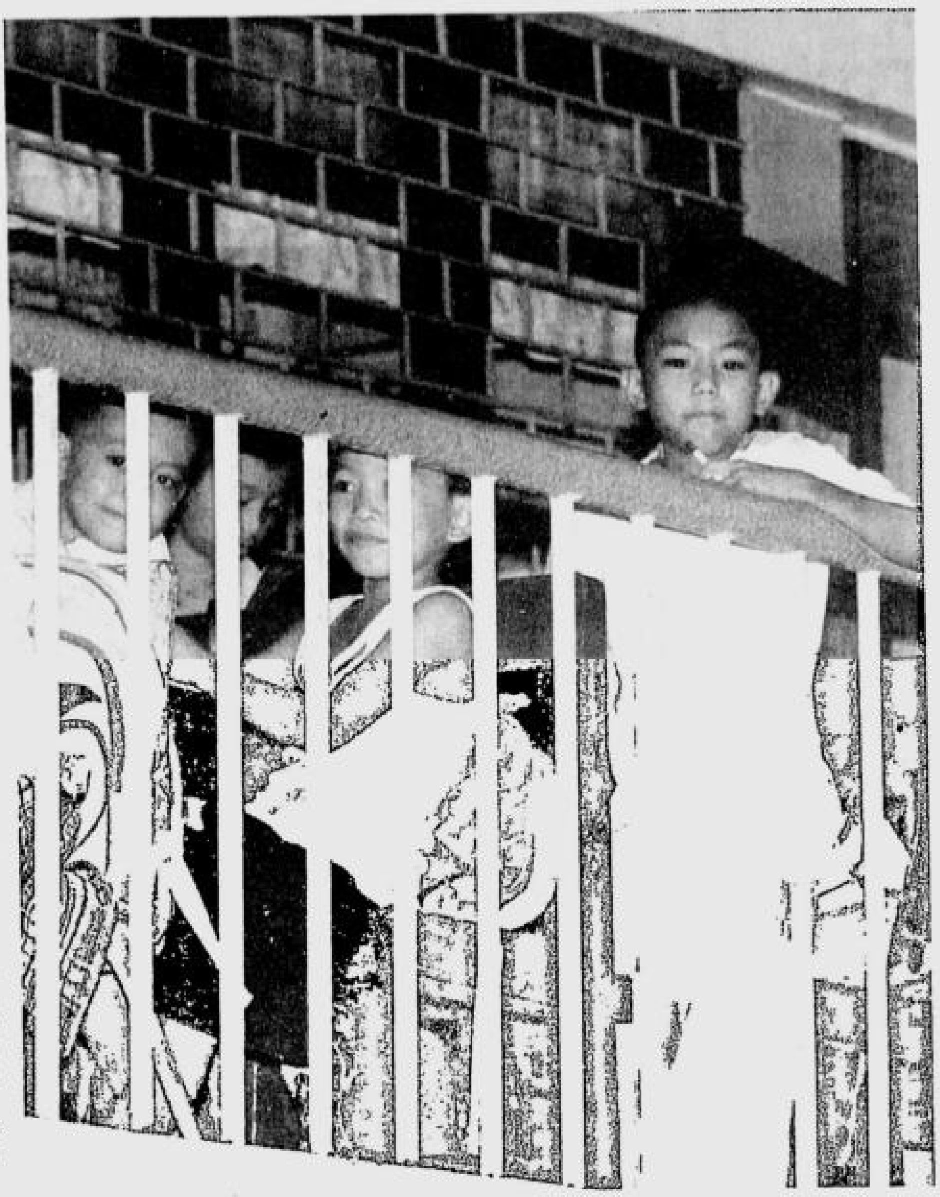
The Philippines provides virtually free education for the first six years—or grades one to six—but the standards in government-run schools are usually much lower than those in expensive private schools.

Only the poorest send their kids to state-run schools.

Library is just a nook

The library is just a nook barely larger than an office cubicle. The laboratory has been closed, the scientific equipment left just for display. There is no music room or audio-visual room.

Instead, resourceful teachers show educational videos on the stairs with the steps acting as seats for the children.



CORRIDOR on the second floor of the Commonwealth Elementary School doubles as a classroom.

JOAN BONDOC

Assistant principal Willie Cacal candidly concedes that Commonwealth has the second-lowest test scores for schools in the district. "This is a result of having too many children in a class," he says.

To accommodate more students, the school operates on two shifts: grades 2, 4 and 6 are in the morning classes from 6 a.m. to 12 noon and Grades 1, 3 and 5 are in the afternoon classes from 12:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.

This forces 7-year-olds to wake up before dawn to catch their early morning class.

Cacal says the children's busy parents give them too little support in their schooling. "Some don't get enough allowance. Some can't get help with homework. Some children aren't even bathed," he says.

The teaching staff has fallen to 230 from last year's 252.

"There's too many of them (pupils) in class, it's hard for me to monitor every pupil's academic performance especially their reading skills," says Corazon Bermudez, who teaches English to first-graders.

Shepherd, not teacher

Allan de Guzman of the Church-run University of Santo Tomas Center for Educational Research and Development says: "I don't think a teacher can handle supervision in a class with more than 60 pupils, he's no longer a teacher but a shepherd of a flock."

De Guzman also says that with such a low pupil-to-textbook ratio, "we do not have the assurance that everybody will end up as readers."

President Macapagal-Arroyo has said that education will be a priority and has called for the building of more schoolrooms and hiring of more teachers to alleviate the overcrowding.

Commonwealth Elementary will get some relief soon as the city government is putting up a new multi-story building on the campus.

Whether the national government can make a similar commitment for other areas in need of classrooms is uncertain.

"It's best for the government to invest its resources in education. If you try to look comparatively speaking, the world standard for education is 8 percent (of the national budget) but the Philippines only invests 1.3 percent," De Guzman remarked.

AFP

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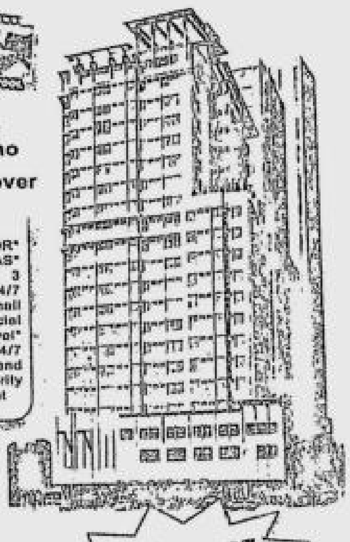

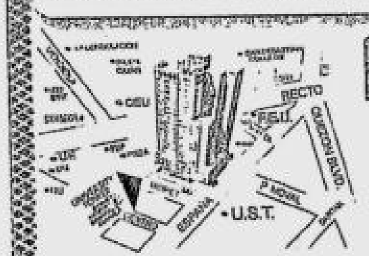

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PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

July 12, Wednesday	9:00 - 12:00 nn	Job & Livelihood Fair (City of Valenzuela) *venue:* SM Valenzuela
July 17, Monday	9:00 - 9:30 am	DTI - CFBCI SME Center Inauguration Rites Manila Innoventions Fair Opening Ceremonies (City of Manila)
	9:30 - 10:00 am	Cocktail Party (by invitation only)
	1:00 - 5:30 pm	Fashion Jewelries & Accessories Making (TESDA) Artificial Plants & Paper Flower Making (TESDA) Herbal Soap Making (TESDA)
July 18, Tuesday	9:00 - 12:00 nn	Job & livelihood Fair (City of Caloocan) *venue:* Caloocan City Hall
	9:00 - 12:00 nn	Business Planning & Financing for SMEs (SBC)
	1:00 - 3:00 pm	Start Your Own Business (PTTC)
	3:30 - 5:30 pm	Business On Line (PTTC)
	5:30 - 6:30 pm	Good Manufacturing Practices (CIC, DTI)
July 19, Wednesday	9:00 - 12:00 nn	Power of Franchising (Phil. Franchising Ass'n.)
	1:00 - 4:30 pm	Assessment for Call Center Agent (TESDA) Cellphone Repair Technology & E-load dealership (TESDA)
July 20, Thursday	9:00 - 12:00 nn	Sales & Marketing Strategies for SMEs (Phil. Mktg. Ass'n)
	1:00 - 3:00 pm	Labor Standards (DOLE-NCR)
	3:30 - 5:30 pm	Labor Law Updates (DOLE-NCR)
July 21, Friday	9:00 - 12:00 nn	Job & Livelihood Fair (City of Quezon) *venue:* Quezon City Hall
	9:00 - 12:00 nn	How to Start A Barangay Micro Business (City of Manila)
	1:00 - 3:00 pm	Work Improvement for Small Establishments (DOLE)
	3:30 - 5:30 pm	Packaging Strategies for SMEs (DOST)
	5:30 - 6:30 pm	Information & Communication Technology for SMEs (ACER)
July 22, Saturday	9:00 - 12:00 nn	Best Business Plan Writing Seminar (AFICS)
	1:00 - 3:00 pm	Best Business Plan Writing Workshop (AFICS)
	3:00 - 3:30 pm	Launching of CFBCI 2nd Best Business Plan Writing Competition
	4:00 - 5:00 pm	Sharing of Success Stories -Mr. Donald Lim - CEO, Yehey.com -Mr. Rommel Juan - Founder, Binalot

1. Seminars & livelihood trainings are *FREE* but slots are on a First Come First Serve Basis.
2. Certificates for attendees of at least 3 modules will be issued.
3. Pre-Registration required. For reservations, please call tel. nos. *244-4991*, *244-4996* and *241-6463*
4. All programs will be conducted in CFBC Auditorium (8th floor, Sky Tower, 68 Dasmariñas St., Binondo Mla.) Job fairs will be held at their respective venue.

DFA: No word yet on UN rights probe

By Nikko Dizon

BEING A PARTY TO UNITED NATIONS HUMAN rights treaties and conventions, the Philippines is obligated to allow UN officials and representatives to enter the country and look into its human rights situation, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said yesterday.

But there are processes to be followed, Gilberto Asuque, DFA spokesperson, said.

"There should first be a note verbale from the representatives to the host government of their intended visit. It's extending the proper courtesy," Asuque told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

The note verbale would be coursed through the Philippine mission to the UN, headed by Enrique Manalo, the country's permanent representative to the UN.

The mission would then forward the matter to Manila. Upon receipt of the note verbale, Asuque said, Manila would "promptly act" on the request.

As of yesterday, Asuque said the DFA has yet to receive a note verbale.

The INQUIRER reached Asuque for comment on the allegation of Bayan Muna partylist Rep. Satur Ocampo that Manalo appeared to be sitting on the requests for invitation by the special rapporteurs who wanted to look into the Philippine human rights situation.

Asuque said that the process includes the application for the appropriate visas by the UN representatives.

"Under treaty obligations, we are required to facilitate the entry of UN officials and representatives," Asuque said.

In a joint press conference with Ocampo last Thursday, opposition Sen. Jamby Madrigal said that the UN special rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression has given the commitment to look into the human rights situation in the Philippines.

NEWSBRIEFS

'Wowowee' case out soon

THE DEPARTMENT of Justice is set to issue this month a resolution on the case against ABS-CBN officials and others in connection with the stampede at the anniversary of the network's noon time show "Wowowee" at the Philsports Arena last February where 74 people died. Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez told reporters that prosecutor Leo Dacera has completed the preliminary investigation of the case and submitted it for resolution. "The preliminary investigation is finished. We are preparing the resolution. It will be released within the month," he said. The preliminary investigation was halted in March when the Court of Appeals issued a temporary restraining order because the DOJ allegedly showed bias against ABS-CBN. The appellate court asked DOJ to comment on the network's claim and conducted hearings to resolve the matter. In May, the Court of Appeals allowed the DOJ to resume its preliminary investigation. The National Bureau of Investigation earlier recommended that top ABS-CBN officials be charged with reckless imprudence resulting to homicide.

Leila B. Salaverria

Shame campaign in Saudi

THE PHILIPPINE Overseas Employment Administration yesterday warned Filipinos illegally residing and working in Saudi Arabia that they are now targets of a "shame campaign" by the Riyadh government. POEA Administrator Rosalinda Dimapilis-Baldoz said the Majlis-as-Shura, or the Saudi consultative assembly, has passed a law that would identify violators of the kingdom's residency law as well as citizens who hire overstaying foreigners for work. The names of the offenders would be published in a newspaper circulating in the areas where they live or work, according to Baldoz. The current Saudi law on residency punishes the offending employer with a fine of 100,000 Saudi rials (about P1.4 million) and two years in jail and the illegal worker with a 50,000-rial (about P700,000) fine and a year in jail.

Jerome Aning

Retrouvaille weekend

RETROUVAILLE, a French word for 'rediscovery,' helps couples heal and renew troubled marriages. This program has saved the marriages of thousands of couples here and abroad who were headed for separation. Retrouvaille consists of a live-in weekend and post weekend sessions for married couples. It is not a spiritual retreat, or a seminar, or a social gathering. Couples are encouraged to put the past behind them and start 'rediscovering' their love for one another. For more informaton, visit the Retrouvaille International websiteat www.HelpOurMarriage.com. A Retrouvaille weekend is scheduled on July 21-23 at the Augustinian Contemplative Nuns Mother of Good Counsel Monastery, Carmel Farms, Purok 8, Tungkong Mangga, San Jose del Monte, Bulacan. For details, call Merit and Bernie at (0917) 795-0682 and 410-7101; or Mar and Armi (0918) 383-3247 or 825-2605; or Tony and Cops at (0918)526-7660 and 435-3291 or Msgr. Cesar Pagulayan, Spiritual Director at (0917) 850-8928. All names will be kept in strictest confidence.

Xavier U homecoming

ATTENTION all graduates of Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan college, high school and grade school. You are invited to come home to Cagayan de Oro City for the Grand Alumni Homecoming on Aug. 18 to 20. Raul L. Noble, XU-AAA president, promises fun and camaraderie for the returning alumni. For details, call the Office of Alumni and University Development at tel. nos. (088) 858-3116, Loc. 2405 or (08822) 72-3116, Loc. 2405, or send email to devoffice@xu.edu.ph or xualumnioffice@yahoo.com.

What senatorial elections? GMA party taking it easy

By Christine O. Avendano

UNLIKE THE OPPOSITION, THE ARROYO administration is not about to reveal its lineup for the 2007 senatorial race and the reluctance is based on its expectation of the holding of parliamentary elections.

"We are for a (shift to a) parliamentary-unicameral (system of government) so why should we talk about senatorial lineup?" President Macapagal Arroyo's political adviser Gabriel Claudio said, when asked about the administration's senatorial lineup.

"It is both premature and inconsistent with our advocacy and the political setting that we hope to see in 2007," Claudio told reporters.

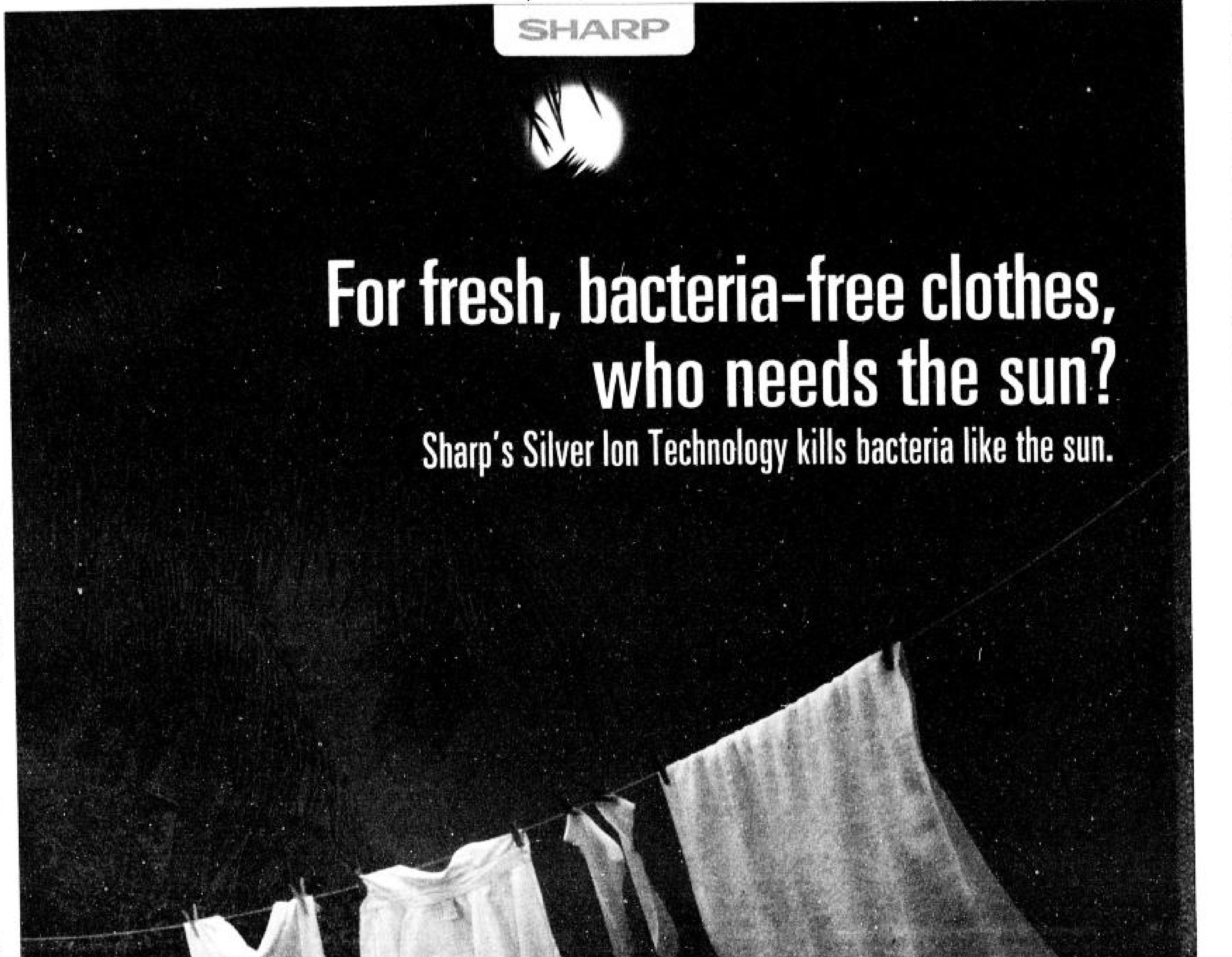
The ruling Lakas party and its coalesced parties were more focused on "strengthening our political and electoral machinery at the local and district level," according to Claudio.

And because of this, he said the administration coalition "feel confident about our level of preparation because we would have been able to put in place better than the opposition our local and grassroots machinery for any eventuality."

Asked then whether the opposition was preparing for an office that was not going to be there, in this case the Senate, Claudio said: "That's how we would like to look at it."

"The administration is prepared for any eventuality ... but whatever the electoral activity is in 2007, be it a plebiscite or an actual election for local, parliamentary or local cum senatorial, we are better prepared than the opposition," he said.

The other day, it was reported that former opposition senators Gregorio Honasan II, Vicente Sotto III, Tessie Oreta and John Osmeña were preparing to run for reelection on the same ticket in next year's mid-term elections.



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NBI summons Señeres about his 'plotters' list

By Margaux C. Ortiz

FORMER AMBASSADOR ROY SEÑERES IS set to appear on Monday before the National Bureau of Investigation, which summoned him as the agency pursued its probe of the coup attempt last February.

NBI Special Task Force chief Reynaldo Esmeralda said the unit issued a subpoena to Señeres Thursday night directing him to answer questions before investigators.

Señeres said that he would execute an affidavit affirming the contents of his earlier interview with the INQUIRER, the NBI official added.

"If Señeres will cooperate and his affidavit is exhaustive enough, he could become a government witness," Esmeralda told reporters.

Gov't witness

In the interview, Señeres revealed that former Executive Secretary Oscar Orbos, former Defense Secretary Renato de Villa, ABC-5 chair Antonio "Tonyboy" Cojuangco, construction mogul F.F. Cruz Jr., and Iñigo Zobel of the wealthy Zobel family were involved in the Feb. 24 coup plot.

The former ambassador also admitted that he encouraged coup leader Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim to withdraw support from President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Zobel denial

Zobel, who is reportedly in Spain, rejected Señeres's claim in a statement faxed to the INQUIRER. "I deny any involvement in any plot with Señeres or anyone else," Zobel said.

Esmeralda said that as soon as Señeres issued his affidavit, the NBI would subpoena all the personalities implicated in the document.

He reiterated that former Tarlac Rep. Jose "Peping" Cojuangco, Council on Philippine Affairs (Copa) secretary general Pastor "Boy" Saycon and Time Asia correspondent Nelly Sindayen would also be summoned to the NBI next week "in light of recent developments on the case."

"We have already expressed our intent to subpoena Ms Sindayen to her lawyer, who will relay the information to their Hong Kong office," Esmeralda said.

Esmeralda had subpoenaed Lim three months ago in connection with a Time Asia Magazine article linking the general and a number of personalities, including Cojuangco and Saycon, to the February coup attempt.

Lim, who was relieved of his post as head of the Scout Rangers regiment based in Fort Magsaysay, Nueva Ecija, denied involvement in a plot against the President when he issued a statement at the NBI last March.

GMA: Ceasefire now before peace talks

From page A1

insincere overtures for peace talks," said presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye in a statement.

"This government will not be hoodwinked by the worn-out, dirty tricks of the CPP-NPA that have dragged (out) the peaceful resolution of the problem for more than 30 years," Bunye added.

Bunye's comments came days after top leaders of the communist-led National Democratic Front visited Norway, the third-party intermediary in the stalled peace talks, to get Oslo to convince Manila to return to the negotiating table.

Earlier, the NDF leaders met with opposition Sen. Jamby Madrigal in the Netherlands. Following the meeting, Madrigal and the NDF issued a joint communique urging the government to resume the stalled peace talks with communist rebels.

The NDF sought the resumption of peace negotiations after the President directed the military to crush the communist insurgency in two years' time. The President ordered the release of P1 billion to fund the anti-insurgency campaign.

In recent months, the military has launched counter-attacks against positions of the 7,400-member NPA in the provinces around Manila.

A number of suspected rebel sympathizers were also killed. Militants pointed to military death squads as the alleged perpetrators of the killings.

Bunye said that if the government "can't get the CPP-NPA in earnest talks based on a ceasefire, this administration will just continue to support peace initiatives at the local level, focusing on NPA units that are willing to lay down their arms and return to the (fold) of the law."

Peace talks were suspended in 2004 after the rebels demanded that the government ask the European Union and the United States to remove them from their lists of foreign terrorist organizations.

On Thursday, a Palace official said that communist rebels must prove their sincerity in silencing the guns of their armed agents.

"We have not totally shut down the peace process. What we are looking for is what comprises their real intent and purpose in the negotiation," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said in a radio interview.

"If they are really sincere, why don't they enforce a real ceasefire?"

Ermita noted that communist rebels had continued to step up their attacks while the peace talks were taking place in the Netherlands.

Exploiting peace process?

Ermita said the peace talks would succeed if a true ceasefire was in place even before a final peace pact was signed, in the manner a peace agreement between the government and the Moro National Liberation Front was concluded.

The government has said the communists' insincerity was the main reason why it has turned a deaf ear to recent calls for the resumption of talks.

"It's bad enough that our Armed Forces and the police force have been reminding us all along that the communists might be using the peace process to bring us into complacency by softening down in our discussions with them," said Ermita.

With an AFP report

Palace timed Lim video release for CBCP assembly, says Cayetano

From page A1

They said the Palace's alleged move was intended to convince the CBCP that the political opposition was in cahoots with leftist rebels and rightist soldiers in the Feb. 24 coup plot.

At a press conference in Quezon City, House Deputy Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano said that from the start, Malacañang's strategy was "to refuse to answer the issues by blaming the political crisis on destabilization plots."

He said that with the airing on Monday of the tape showing Lim withdrawing support from President Macapagal-Arroyo, the "goal" was "to impute ill motives to oppositionists, to make them appear as power-grabbers."

"Of course, any Church leader will not support selfish power grabs, especially violent power grabs," said the lawmaker from Taguig-Pateros.

'Persecuting critics'

Thus, he said, the opposition should point out the difference between a constitutional process such as the impeachment drive against Ms Arroyo and independent moves for a power grab.

At the same press conference, Rep. Joel Villanueva of the party-list group Citizens Battle Against Corruption said the CBCP should not let itself be manipulated by an allegedly scheming administration.

"It's our duty to know the truth, for the truth shall set us free. The administration doesn't want to address the root cause of the problem and instead focuses on persecuting its critics," he said.

Villanueva said Ms Arroyo should not only go after Lim and his backers but also inquire into the root cause of restiveness in the military.

"If [Ms Arroyo's chief of staff] Mike Defensor is saying that the President's declaration of a week-long emergency was vindicated by the videotape showing Lim withdrawing support from the President, the opposition is also vindicated by the 'Hello Garci' tape," he said.

He was referring to the tapped phone conversations between Ms Arroyo and then Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano that supposedly proved cheating in the 2004 polls.

From ballot to bullet

Cayetano said the release of the tape was also aimed at preventing many prominent private citizens from joining the citizens-led impeachment attempt this year by trying to portray them as coup plotters.

"In reality, the impeachment process is the answer to keeping military adventurism at bay because when you have a constitutional and legal process that people can rely on, you close the door on those who are taking the extraconstitutional path," he said.

Cayetano, a lawyer, said that in the past, the argument for democracy was that "we should surrender the bullets and go to the ballots because it's only through democratic governance that progress can be attained."

He said bullets, bloodshed and war would lead to further armed conflict while the ballot would lead to consensus and cooperation.

"Our main problem now is the accusation that the election was stolen in 2004, and that the bullet, represented by the military, was used in 2004. It's the President who brought this from the ballot to the bullet," Cayetano said.

He said that if Ms Arroyo now wanted to "bring it back to the ballot," she had only three options—call a "snap" election, resign, or face impeachment.

'Self-serving'

At the 30th anniversary celebration of the Bishops-Businessmen's Conference in Makati City, Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, CBCP president, lamented Malacañang's purported double standard in applying the principle of separation of Church and State.

Lagdameo described as "self-serving" the Malacañang standard, especially in the wake of Bishop Deogracias Iñiguez's decision to file an impeachment complaint against Ms Arroyo.

"When politicians, or shall we say even Malacañang, like what the CBCP is saying, they will not invoke the separation of Church and State. But when what the CBCP says somehow jars [them], they will always invoke the [principle]. I look at it as self-serving," Lagdameo told reporters.

Malacañang had earlier called on the CBCP and other members of the clergy to steer clear of the latest efforts to impeach Ms Arroyo over allegations of cheating in the 2004 election.

At the height of the controversy in July 2005, Ms Arroyo and her allies praised the CBCP, then headed by Davao Archbishop Fernando Capalla, for refusing to join calls for her resignation.

Lagdameo yesterday maintained that the Church remained relevant in "clarifying issues and guiding the people, especially on matters that are connected with morality."

The prelate of Jaro, Iloilo, also pointed out that the impeachment issue was both moral and constitutional, contrary to Defensor's stated position that it was purely legal.

"It's only a matter of who's looking at it and what he wants to say," Lagdameo said.

'I'll do it again'

Bishop Iñiguez said he did not regret his groundbreaking move of filing an impeachment complaint.

"I'll do it again," he told the INQUIRER during a break in the BBC forum.

Asked whether his decision could set a precedent on the clergy getting directly involved in politics, Iñiguez said: "I think it was an opening for many [people] to become aware of the issue, that it's still an issue, and an invitation to get involved."

The Caloocan bishop, who also heads the CBCP Commission on Public Affairs, said he was "overwhelmed" by the strong support he had received.

"The CBCP respects Bishop Iñiguez's personal option and will not go with the suggestion of Malacañang to sanction him," Lagdameo had said in a statement.

Having received that support, Iñiguez yesterday appeared cool to the idea of raising the impeachment issue at the CBCP's second plenary assembly.

Lagdameo said the matter was not included in the agenda.

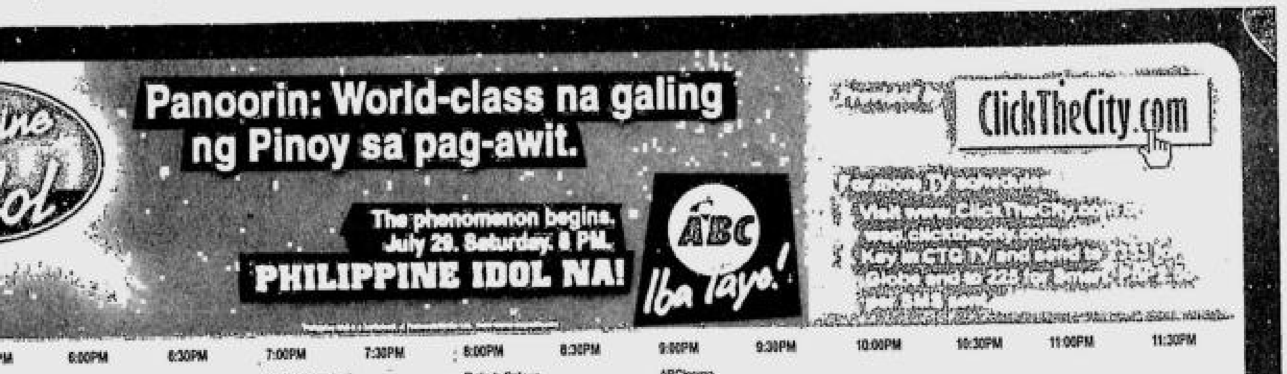
But he said he was not closing the door on the possibility that some bishops might raise the impeachment issue and eventually prompt the CBCP to come up with a pastoral statement on it.

"I keep my mind open to whatever the bishops will recommend," Lagdameo said.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

INQUIRER TV GUIDE

Saturday, July 8, 2006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Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5	Kid's TV	KNN	Anime Ring Kaisho		PBA					Wow Mali ng Mali		Ripley's Believe It Or Not		ABCinema					
ABS-CBN 2	ETK				Little Big Star		Komiks		Let's Go	Quizon Avenue		TV Patrol World	XXX			Sabado Movie Greats			
AXN		Lost (Season II)		Lost (Season II)		Mondo Magic	Ultimate Guinness World Records	30 Seconds To Fame	E Buzz	The Ultimate Fighter		Maximum Exposure (Season I)		Lost (Season II)		Numb3rs (Season 2)		Supernatural (Season I)	
Cartoon Network	Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi	The Road Runner Show	Tom & Jerry Show	[illegible] Adventures Of Billy & Mandy		Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy [illegible] Camp Lazlo		The Simpsons		Batman Beyond: Return Of The Joker [illegible] Scooby-Doo & The Witch's Ghost [illegible]		Courage The Cowardly Dog	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy (8:45 PM)	The Simpsons	The Batman	Power Rangers Dino Thunder	Gundam Seed		Aqua Teen Hunger Force [illegible] Sealab 2021
Cinema One	Super B				Bahay Ni Lola 2				All My Life										
Cinemax		Two For Texas (2:50 PM)						Trippin' (5:55 PM)			Lethal Dose (7:25 PM)			Just Cause			Once Upon A Time In Mexico		
CNN		World News		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	World News		World News	World Sport	World News				Talk Asia	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart
Crime/Suspense		Mastermind	Forensic Files	Bones		Psychic Detectives	Body Of Evidence	Crossing Jordan		Law & Order		Bones		E-Ring					
Disney Channel	Lizzie McGuire	Totally Spies- Double Episodes		Brandy & Mr. Whiskers	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Buzz on Maggie	Phil Of The Future	Suite Life Of Zack And Cody	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Mr. Bean	America's Funniest Home Videos	Kim Possible	Martin Mystery	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN		Pool Snooker Premier Snooker League '05				UCA NHSCC Open Div. Med Cheerleading	U.S. Senior Open Golf Champ 2nd rd					Germany Tonight	Major League Baseball Friday						Pro Billiards '05 Women's Tour of Champs
ETC		Joan Of Arcadia 2		Friends 10	Will & Grace 4	Veronica Mars 2		The O.C. 3		Beach Girls		Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		Saturday Night Live		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Trading Spouses		Today Show - 1 Hour Version		Dateline		Showdog Moms & Dads		NBC Nightly News	Hollywood One On One	Blowout 2		Inside the Actor's Studio		ER		NBC Nightly News	WSJR
EWTN	Visionaries, Mystics & Stigmatists	Chaplet Of Mercy/ Angelus	Image Of God	Adventures In Odyssey	Rosary With Mother Angelica	Knights Of St. [illegible]	Catholic Compass		Life Is Worth Living	The World Over Encore		Daily Mass Live		Holy Land Rosary/ Angelus	The Word Was Made Flesh	Voices On Virtue	Backstage	Life on The Rock Encore	
Fox News		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Special Report With Brit Hume		Fox & Friends Saturday						Bulls & Bears	Cavuto On Business	Forbes On Fox	Cashin' In
GMA 7	Startalk				Wish Ko Lang (4:20 PM)		Fantasikids (5:20 PM)		Pinoy Pop Superstar		Bitoy's Funniest Videos (7:20 PM)		Kapuso Mo, Jessica Soho				Hokus Pokus (10:20 PM)		Showbiz Stripped
Hallmark Channel		Strong Medicine (3:15 PM)		Gift of Love: The Daniel Huffman Story (4:05 PM)			Fielder's Choice (5:40 PM)				More Than Meets The Eye: The Joan Brock Story			And Never Let Her Go			And Never Let Her Go (10:35PM)		
HBO		The Big Preview: Pirates Of The Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	Something The Lord Made				Eraser				Hard Target			Spanglish				The Big Preview: Pirates Of The Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest	[illegible] (11:25PM)
Hero TV	Mon Colle Knights	Shaider	Masked Rider Ryuki	Gransazers	Shaman King	Bucky the Incredible Kid	Jester The Adventurer	Musumet	The X-Treme Team	Love Hina	Fruits Basket	Lost Universe	Hare TV Theatre	Babel II	[illegible]	Captain Kappa	Mon Colle Knights	Shaider	Masked Rider Ryuki
IBC 13		Home Shopping Network		[illegible]		Auto Review	Cetamo		[illegible] Jackpot		Global Family Series		Japan Video Topics		Bilog		Pilipinas Sabong Sports		
JackTV	X-Men	JLU	The Batman	Evolver	Filter	Bottomline		Raw				Distraction	Banzai	Last Comic Standing		South Park	South Park	Drawn Together	Crank Yankers
Lifestyle Network	Living Space	HGTV Special		Sheila Bridges Designer Living	[illegible]	Simply Wine With Andrea Immer	Inside Dish	My Country, My Kitchen	Emeril Live		Iron Chef America		Margo		Style Star	I Do Diaries			
MTV Philippines										Wildboyz									
MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Bandarito	MYX News	MYX Presents		Take 5	Radio MYX	Top Of The Pops	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Live!		Pinoy MYX Countdown				MYX Backtrax	MYXLOG
National Geographic		The Living Edens: [illegible], Alaska Wild Coast		No Borders				Animals Like Us		Tough Taiwan: The Butterfly Coast		The Living Edens: Namib - Africa's Burning Shore		Predator World: Relentless Enemies				Predator Wars: Stampede of the Megaherd	
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports [illegible]		Kamao		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)		Youth Voice Online		CSIS Member's Hour		Info Hour On NBN		A.S.K		Kruzada Kontra Krimen	
Nickelodeon	Drake & Josh	Zoey 101	Ned's Declassified School Survival Guide	The Fairly OddParents [illegible] - Now Show!	Catscratch	Avatar: Legend Of Aang	Danny Phantom	Trollz	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That: Just For Kicks - Now Show!	Zoey 101	Ned's Declassified School Survival Guide	Dark Oracle	Girls In Love	The Amanda Show	The Brothers Garcia	The Fairly OddParents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Apoy Sa Puso				Totsutok				Anak Pagsubok Lang				Always In My Heart				[illegible]
Qtv		Lois And Clark		Galaxy Angels		Posh		[illegible]		[illegible] Robot		Day-Off		Sabado Showdown				Groupie TV	
RPN 9		Go Negosyo		Biyaheng Langit	Ride, Eat, Travel	Man & Machine		[illegible]		[illegible] Justice		CSI Miami		Saturday Night Playhouse					
SBN 21								Sony Music Video		Sony Music Video		Oras Ng Himala		[illegible]		Shepherd's Voice		SBN Music Video	
Solar Sports			Boxing Greatest Classics			2006 US Open 9-Ball C'ship		[illegible]		WNBA '06: New York Liberty at Chicago Sky				Superfights: [illegible] vs Gonzalo Bonilla				2006 Thomas Cup Classics	
Sports Plus		This Is The PGA Tour		French Open '06 [illegible] Highlights				World Poker Tour Hollywood Home				Ultimate Fighting Championship				Golf Today	Inside the PGA	Buick [illegible] Highlights	
Star Movies			Million Dollar Baby				Boogeyman (5:45 PM)				Bridget Jones's Diary (7:20 PM)			Submerged			The Big Lebowski		
Star World		Third Watch [illegible]		Miami Vice		Wild Card		Less Than Perfect	The Drew Carey Show	Gillette 2006 Fifa World Cup		TNA Xplosion		World's Most Amazing Videos		Enterprise		The Simpsons	
Studio 23								Sports TV	Survivor Panama Exile Island	Pinoy Big Brother		7th Heaven (8:10 PM)			Studio 23 Presents				

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Courage wanted slain labor leader transferred to Manila

By Norman Bordadora, Vicente S. Labro
PDI Visayas Bureau

THE CONFEDERATION FOR UNITY, RECOGNItion and Advancement of Government Employees (Courage) said yesterday it had asked Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman to move municipal agrarian reform officer Paquito Diaz to a safe place when he was killed Thursday night.

Courage national president Ferdinand Gaite said Diaz himself received confirmation from friends in the Philippine National Police that the slain labor leader was in an "order of battle" list of the military in the area.

Courage even asked Pangandaman to transfer Diaz to the Department of Agrarian Reform central office for security reasons.

Diaz was the regional chair of Courage in eastern Visayas. He is the third member of the national organization of government employees to be brutally killed by motorcycle-riding gunmen wearing masks.

Diaz was shot at close range on Thursday at 6 p.m. near his house at Esperas Street, Magallanes district in Tacloban City. He was waiting for a friend when two men riding tandem on a DT Yamaha motorcycle sped by.

The unidentified assassin, who was riding at the back of the bike, alighted and shot Diaz with two bullets from a caliber .45 pistol, hitting him on the left eye and left chest.

The suspects, who wore helmets, fled towards the downtown area, witnesses said.

Supt. Anacleto Limbo, Tacloban police chief, said Diaz was immediately brought to nearby Bethany Hospital but attending physicians there pronounced him dead on arrival.

Limbo said Diaz's brother said the labor leader had been "wanted" for over a year now because of his involvement in Courage and other causes.

He said his men and the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group would be working together in investigating the case. So far, there are no clear leads.

Lulu Palencia, chair of the Citizen's Anti-Crime Assistance Group (CAAG), said in an interview over Tacloban radio station dyDW, that Diaz was the fifth among the active leaders of the Leyte Metropolitan Water District (LMWD) office labor-management row killed by unidentified men riding a motorcycle.

Palencia said the other four were: Ely Josef, Sammy Bandilla, lawyer Fedilito Dacut, and Rev. Edison Lapuz.

Diaz, a former radio reporter, was a municipal agrarian reform officer who went AWOL (absence without leave) until his death. He had been with DAR for about 20 years now, starting as a casual employee in the 1980s.

'Plinky' posts bail to avoid arrest

By Leila B. Salaverria

FORMER TV HOST MARIE ROXANNE "PLINKY Recto" posted a P12,000-bail on Thursday evening after a Bago City Regional Trial Court in Negros Occidental ordered her arrested for a direct assault charge filed by the father of her son.

Recto, who listed her occupation as "Pilates instructor," allegedly kicked Magdaleno Peña on the left shin on Jan. 18 during the hearing of the child custody case Peña had filed against her.

Judge Herminigildo Octaviano of the Bago City Regional Trial Court issued the warrant of arrest on July 3.

Recto surrendered voluntarily to the National Bureau of Investigation's Special Task Force and went to the Manila Metropolitan Court to post bail.

The Bago City Prosecutor also filed direct assault charges against Recto for attacking a person in authority since Peña, a lawyer, was representing himself in the case.

Assistant city prosecutor Elmer Soguilon said in his resolution that Peña's version of the incident was more credible than Recto's.

Peña claimed that Recto kicked him after Peña handed over to Recto their son, upon orders of Judge Henry Trocino.

Trocino had asked Peña to allow Recto to see their son.

After Recto allegedly kicked Peña, he reportedly uttered cries of pain and referred to himself as the "battered boyfriend."

Peña also said his left leg allegedly bled from Recto's kick.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, July 8, 2006
13th Week in Ordinary Time
1st Reading: Am 9:11-15
Gospel: Matthew 9:14-17

The disciples of John came to him with the question, "How is it that we and the Pharisees fast on many occasions, but not your disciples?"

Jesus answered them, "How can you expect wedding guests to mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? Time will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, then they will fast.

"No one patches an old coat with a piece of unshrunken cloth, for the patch will shrink and tear an even bigger hole in the coat. Besides you don't put new wine in old wineskins. If you do, the wineskins will burst and the wine be spilt. No, you put new wine in fresh skins; then both are preserved."

Commentary

The other side of the prophet's rage is a promise of hope, and so Amos' words are now of restoration, rebuilding, being raised up and harvest of plenty, of being at home in their lands. And Jesus seeks to tell his disciples that they are not to fast while he is with them—the bridegroom, who is the image of the wedding feast of peace, abiding justice, and welcome for the poor. Jesus' kingdom is a new thing, more amazing than anything the prophets of old sang of—it is new wine, life and ways of living as God desires for all: abundant life, especially for those most lacking. Do we understand? Do we live with this promise shared with the least of our brothers and sisters?

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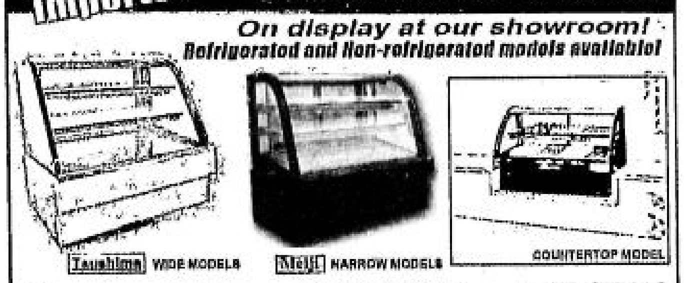

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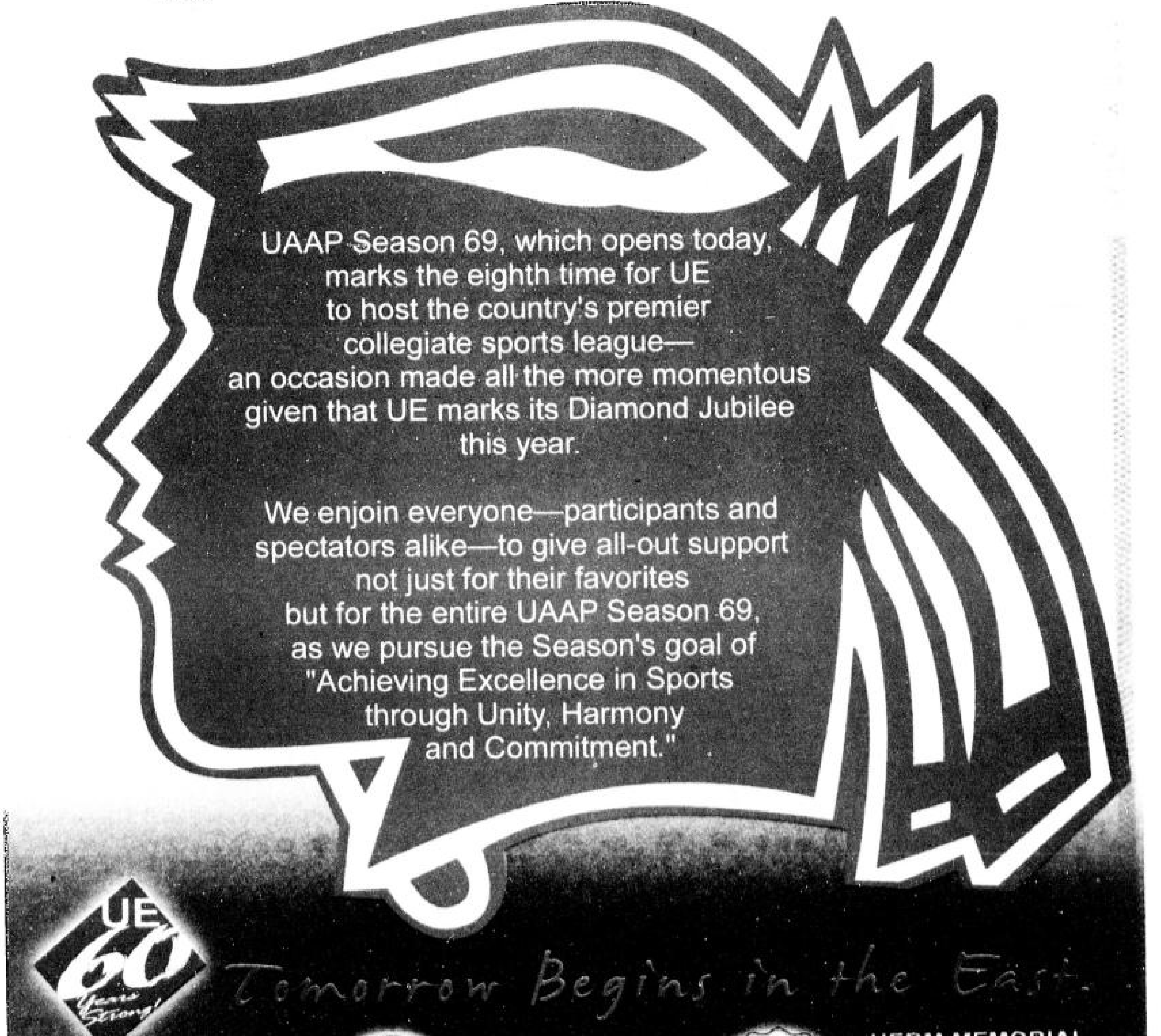

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Strike 3 for lawyer arrested with 'fugitives'

From page A1

Last February, authorities found him in the same vehicle carrying 1st Lt. Lawrence San Juan, one of four rebel soldiers who had earlier escaped from detention in Fort Bonifacio.

Wounded in 1st brush with the law

He was out on bail when he was nabbed again yesterday.

During his first brush with law enforcers in 1997, Belmonte, a nephew of Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte, was wounded in the chest during a supposed firefight between his group and government agents.

Belmonte reappeared in the limelight last Feb. 21 when he and San Juan were stopped at a Batangas checkpoint after allegedly meeting with communist rebels.

Student leader

A student leader at the University of the Philippines, Belmonte was an officer of the student council of the then UP College of Arts and Sciences in 1983.

Belmonte belonged to Alpha Sigma, a fraternity that had produced leaders in both the government and the Communist Party of the Philippines.

During his and San Juan's arrest last February, authorities claimed to have found electronic documents containing proof of a supposed alliance between communist rebels and rogue soldiers.

'Points of agreement'

Left-leaning organizations as well as a lawyer for the Magdalo rebels, Ruel Pulido, had dismissed the allegations as "foolishness."

One of the documents supposedly seized during the February incident was titled Important Points Agreed and Understood between the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (PKP) and the Katipunan ng mga Anak ng Bayan (KAB).

According to the document, the two parties agreed "to fight for the ouster of the Arroyo regime (and) to replace it with a government that is favorable to minimum reforms needed in the interest of the nation."

The KAB is a political movement made up of civilians and soldiers who have formed the Makabayang Kawal ng Pilipinas (MKP), the document said. Police claimed that the MKP's leaders included former Sen. Gregorio Honasan.

'Ousting GMA'

"The PKP and the KAP joins with the people in their aim to oust the Arroyo government, and in its place, to establish a transitional government...," the agreement said.

"Both the PKP-BHB (New People's Army) and the KAB recognize the need for an armed component and a democratic mass movement and a broad united front," the document said.

"The ouster of the Arroyo regime shall be the result of a broad and united anti-Arroyo front; of the continued division of the ranks of those who support the Arroyo government; of a widening disgust, and the withdrawal of support ... of officers and men of the Armed Forces (from) the Arroyo regime; and the separate and coordinated military offensives and other forms of cooperation of armed forces fighting the regime like the BHB and MKP."

One of the aims of the alliance is the creation of a transition government, the documents said.

THIRD TIME AROUND for lawyer Christopher Belmonte (standing) arrested with the Magdalo officers. REM ZAMORA

Rebel 'powerhouse' falls: 6 Magdalo officers, 2 civilians seized

From page A1

The raid on a two-story, stone house on No: 34 Adler St. in Fil-Invest 2 in Barangay Batasan Hills, Quezon City, capped three nights of stakeout.

Officials said the house had been rented for P35,000 a month from its owner who is now in the United States. They refused to divulge the owner's identity. *(See sidebars on Page A8).*

The six rebel soldiers—Capt. Nathaniel Rabonza, 1Lt. Sonny Sarmiento and Patricio Bumidang Jr., 2Lt. Angelbert Gay and Aldrin Baldonado, who are all from the Army, and Navy Lt.j.g. Kiram Sadava—were all in handcuffs, as was lawyer Jose Christopher "Kit" Belmonte, when they were presented to the media soon after their arrest.

The second civilian, a Michael Yangson, was detained at Camp Crame. A woman and two boys aged 10 and 12, who were also in the house when the raid occurred, were released, police said.

Some of the rebel soldiers' weapons were lying on a sofa in the house but the soldiers offered no resistance, raiding officials said.

WHAT HAVE WE GOT HERE? A bomb expert lines up the explosive materials seized from the Magdalo safehouse. REM ZAMORA

Big blow

Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga told reporters: "Today, a big blow to military adventurism was delivered."

"We have prevented the possible conduct of terroristic actions as revealed by their plans that we have unmasked earlier, in pursuit of continuing efforts to destabilize the government," Senga also said.

Besides Armalite rifles and grenades, operatives also found C4 explosives, detonating devices and other paraphernalia, as well as several blueprints.

Blueprint of Batasan

"One of the blueprints recovered is the blueprint of the Batasan Complex. As we all know, the Sona address of the President is fast approaching," Calderon pointed out.

Senga raised an intriguing point.

"It will arouse your interest why they would rent a house at this point in time. And then we found this blueprint of the Batasan in their possession," he said. "It's early to jump to some conclusions but we are looking at bits and pieces of information and we are trying to put them together."

Asked if there was a plot to bomb the Batasan, Senga said: "It's too early to say."

Who are their backers?

Still, two questions intrigued investigators: How did the rogue soldiers obtain a blueprint of the Batasan building when only the public works department, they said, keeps such blueprints?

And, why did they move into the area, which was near the Batasan, just when Ms Arroyo's Sona was approaching.

"The next step is to identify civilian supporters and retired military officers who are their cohorts," Senior Supt. Asher Dolina said.

Dolina also said: "What we want to find out is who rented it (the house). The owner of the house is inconsequential at this point. (The owner) is in the United States."

Dolina said policey would also look into possible financier or financiers of the rogue soldiers' stay in Quezon City, noting that their safehouse was rented. He did not elaborate, except to say investigation was ongoing.

GMA elated

The six rebel soldiers comprised the biggest group of alleged plotters arrested by security forces in the wake of coup plots and rumors. Their capture followed the recent public airing of a February video showing former First Scout Rangers Regiment chief Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim calling on soldiers to withdraw their support of Ms Arroyo.

Visiting Cebu yesterday, an elated Ms Arroyo congratulated the police and the military for a job well done.

The arrests were carried out by Pacer, the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group and the Intelligence and Security Group of the Philippine Army.

"We were able to maintain the element of surprise," an officer who supervised the raid told the INQUIRER. "It only took us two minutes to control the area."

3 months of surveillance

The first teams that broke into the house came from an elite strike force of the Presidential Anti-Crime and Response (Pacer) unit, police said.

The way raiding officers described it, the six soldiers were armed, but they never got the chance to pick up their weapons, if they at all intended to.

The raid capped a three-night stakeout and three months of surveillance.

Some were asleep

"We waited for the opportunity that they would all be together there," said Dolina, head of the National Capital Region-Criminal Investigation and Detection Group.

At 2 a.m., the police confirmed that their targets were inside the house. An officer said at least nine teams surrounded the house.

"When the entering force moved in, one person saw them and locked the gate. The team had to climb over the fence," the officer said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Dolina said some of the occupants were still asleep while the others were already awake when the police assaulted the house.

"Some were in short pants," he said.

Four of the soldiers tried to break out but were nabbed after scaling a back wall.

One of them, Sadava (identified in the police statement as "Badava" sprained his leg. His companions were bruised and injured.

Could blow up building

Among items seized during the raid were six cell phones, 25 rounds of ammunition for a 9mm pistol, and 19 for an M14 rifle, three blasting caps, eight hand grenades, three M203 grenades, one demolition cord, three detonating cords, 15 demolition blocks, a TNT demolition block, three M16 Armalite rifles with two magazines, an M4 Colt Armalite, and a carbine with a magazine.

"These [explosives] are enough to blow up a tall building," said Dolina.

The woman and the boys found in the house were said to be relatives of Yangson.

For appearances only

"They were props so the neighborhood will see a family ... but we know they were not part of the plan, whatever plans (they) had," Dolina said.

Police said they would charge Yangson and Belmonte with obstruction of justice, which would include harboring fugitives.

The three cars found outside the house were in Yangson's name, Dolina said.

Only 'Gringo' at large

Calderon hailed the arrests as a "big blow to destabilization forces." He said only the group of ex-Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan remained at large.

"*Siya na lang ang natitira* (He's the only one left)," said Calderon.

Sarmiento, Rabonza and Bumidang carried a P500,000 bounty each for their alleged participation in the 2003 Oakwood mutiny in Makati City. The money—P1.5 million in all—will go to informants, police said.

The trio escaped from detention in Fort Bonifacio on Jan. 17 while on trial for coup d'etat. The other three men had gone on absence without leave (Awol) soon after.

Belmonte was the same lawyer who was caught with rebel soldier Lt. Lawrence San Juan in Batangas last February. *(See story on Page A1).*

Grim looks

The six rebel officers and Belmonte wore yellow shirts and basketball shorts when presented to the media.

As they were made to stand behind Senga, Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon and Calderon, the officers grimly and defiantly looked back at the press and the other officers in the audience.

Sarmiento particularly threw dagger looks. The rest including Belmonte looked straight ahead. A couple of them showed a slight limp.

Belmonte, out on bail, is among the 48 people charged with rebellion for the Feb. 24 failed coup plot.

Gonzales vows no letup against plotters

CEBU CITY—NATIONAL SECURITY Adviser Norberto Gonzales said the government's determination to crush destabilizers would not waver even if the threats to it were down to one percent.

"Until it's 100 percent over, we will not stop," he said following a Cabinet meeting here held after the military announced the arrest of six rebel Magdalo officers and two civilians.

He said it was about time to "remove all the threats, so we could all move on."

Gonzales said he expected a "calmer" State of the Nation Address of the President on Monday with the arrest of the Magdalo soldiers.

Rep. Joel Mayo Almario of Davao Oriental said the arrests boosted efforts to "bring to justice those who conspired to overthrow" President Arroyo.

Rep. Mauricio Domogan of Baguio City said there was no way adventurists would win over a duly constituted government. *Connie E. Fernandez, PDI Visayas Bureau and Michael Ubac in Manila*

Magdalo Gallery

- **CAPT. Nathaniel Rabonza,** Philippine Military Academy Class 1995, was with the Army's Special Forces at the time of the July 2003 mutiny and facing trial for leading the mutiny; bolted Fort Bonifacio on Jan. 17.
- **1st Lt. Patricio Bumidang Jr.,** PMA Class '98, was with the Army's Light Armor Regiment at the time of the mutiny; also one of the Magdalo officers on trial.
- **Army 1st Lt. Sonny Sarmiento,** PMA Class '98, was company commander of the 1st Infantry Division at the time of the mutiny, was with Rabonza, Bumidang Jr. and Army Lt. Lawrence San Juan when they escaped from Bonifacio; also on trial for the mutiny.
- **2nd Lt. Angelbert Gay,** PMA Class '97, was with the Army's 21st Infantry Battalion at the time of the mutiny; was reported to have gone missing (absent without leave) in January and eventually dropped from the rolls; among 70 officers charged with gross misconduct after their names were included in a diskette allegedly recovered after the failed mutiny.
- **Army 2nd Lt. Aldrin Baldonado,** PMA Class '01, reported by the Army to have gone Awol on Jan. 5, reported back on Jan. 16, but went Awol again.
- **Navy Lt. Kiram Sadava,** a member of the Navy's Special Operations Group.

Kate Pedroso, PDI Research

Who is Ador Noche?

By DJ Yap

WHO OWNS THE SAFE HOUSE

The name Ador Noche croppe up as police delved into the own ership of the house on Adl Street in Quezon City where go ernment agents seized six Ma dalo officers and two civilians.

The name appeared on a wat bill for the house.

A security officer at the subd vision said he heard the nan when a colonel called and aske him how the police could tra the name because that was wh appeared on the bill.

The security officer, who ask not to be identified, didn't know

"What I know is that the own has been abroad for a long tim he told the INQUIRER.

He said that after the ra someone who said he represe ed the family also called an asked that an inventory be made of the furniture in the house.

The security officer told the INQUIRER that no furniture was missing.

None of the five male caretakers in the house could shed the smallest light on its owner. "We really can't say anything," one of the men said.

Neither could the tricycle driver in the neighborhood.

"All I know is that the owner is in a foreign country."

We Can Do It Again!

Statement of the "Hyatt 10"
July 8, 2006

Exactly a year ago from today, we tendered our collective irrevocable resignation from the Arroyo cabinet and asked President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to make the supreme sacrifice and voluntarily relinquish her office.

Today, we stand united—with deeper concern and firmer resolve—that our conviction has not changed:

- Government remains a critical arena for implementing wide-ranging reforms in our country;
- Leadership is at the heart of effective governance;
- Without credible and legitimate leadership, governance will be pushed to the margins and reforms cannot take place, much less be sustained;
- Sustained and substantial reforms can only come about if they address the systemic nature of our problems.

Over time, despite the suppression of efforts to get to the bottom of the ongoing crisis, this much is clear: widespread irregularities and illegal use of public funds attended the victory of Arroyo in the 2004 elections, extensive cover-up was perpetuated to hide the fraud and authoritarian measures were employed to stifle protest by an enraged citizenry. Thankfully, the Supreme Court rose to the occasion and affirmed the primacy of our people's fundamental civil and political rights over exaggerated threats to the security of the state.

To divert people's attention, the Palace foisted upon our people a bogus people's initiative to amend the Constitution. Deceptively, it has been presented to our people as the answer to every conceivable problem that we face. Fortunately, our people's vigilance and determination have so far frustrated this move. Moreover, the patently unconstitutional initiative has only succeeded in broadening the opposition to Arroyo's attempts to tamper with our Constitution.

And as the people's initiative heads for derailment, the Arroyo administration has unsheathed another diversionary ploy by raising the communist bogey and shifted policy in addressing the insurgency movement from negotiations to a heavy-handed, militarist approach. As we had painfully learned during the Marcos years, this approach cannot and will not succeed. It will only escalate the conflict and lead to the dislocation of and injuries and death to, not only the insurgents, but, in most cases, to journalists, church workers, peasant leaders, legitimate activists, and helpless and innocent civilians.

In this climate of fear and impunity, the Arroyo administration appears to have succeeded in frustrating our people's search for truth. It must not delude itself in thinking itself victorious, as it has proclaimed recently. There are no victors in this continuing impasse—only victims. And the biggest casualties are our deeply cynical and ever suffering poor themselves and our much weakened social, economic and political institutions.

Under these circumstances, it is almost impossible to push urgent and vital reforms without resolving the political impasse rooted in the central question of the legitimacy of President Arroyo. For this reason, we propose the following immediate measures:

1. Amend specific provisions of the Constitution to pave the way for (a) the revamp of COMELEC, (b) the holding of snap elections for the position of President, and (c) the election of delegates to a Constitutional Convention, at the same time as the May, 2007 elections;
2. Create an orderly and peaceful climate for the conduct of the above electoral exercises by (a) a temporary cessation of hostilities and laying and strengthening the ground for peace negotiations with the rebels, and (b) a joint declaration among the major forces in the political spectrum to abide by a set of conditions for the successful conduct of the above process without resort to violence and fraud;
3. Ensure basic social protection and services that will address the needs of our people for basic education, nutrition, primary health and sanitation;
4. Secure the fiscal health of the economy by improving the country's tax effort, plugging leakages in tax collection, rationalizing public expenditures, and the timely passage of a national budget; and
5. Restore people's confidence in key oversight and regulatory agencies of government and Constitutional bodies, such as the Office of the Ombudsman, the Civil Service Commission, and the Presidential Commission on Good Governance.

But, recognizing that profound and sustained systemic change is not solely the business of government but is the collective responsibility of all citizens, we also propose the convening of a multi-stakeholder assembly of leaders that will work alongside the Constitutional Convention in a dialogue process that will lead to an agenda for national reconciliation, peace, and sustained development.

In the past, we have shown our capacity to rise above our own helplessness and sense of hopelessness, surprising the world during some of our darkest moments with a demonstration of our goodness, goodwill, and courage as a people. *We can do it again!*

Holding **Y**ou **A**ccountable **T**o **T**he Nat**IO**n

Forex reserves hit record $21B in June

From page A1

Bonds in May.

The Brady Bonds were so called after Nicholas Brady, the Treasury chief of the United States during the term of President Ronald Reagan, proposed the issuance of these bonds to help heavily indebted countries like the Philippines restructure their commercial bank debt .starting in the 1980s.

Ability to service debt

The GIR—consisting of the BSP's gross foreign currency holdings, gold reserves, special drawing rights from the International Monetary Fund and foreign investments—is an indicator of the country's ability to service the foreign exchange requirements of the economy like importation and debt service.

The level of reserves as of June was equivalent to about 4.3 months of imports of goods and payments of services.

"This level is also equivalent to 3.4 times the country's short-term debt based on original maturity and 1.8 times based on residual maturity," Tetangco said.

Short-term debt based on residual maturity refers to outstanding external debt with original maturity of one year or less, plus principal payments on medium- and long-term loans of the public and private sectors falling due within the next 12 months.

The net international reserves, including revaluation of reserve assets and reserve-related liabilities, increased to $20.52 billion from the end-May level of $20.3 billion.

NIR refers to the difference between the GIR and the combined total of short-term liabilities and use of IMF credits.

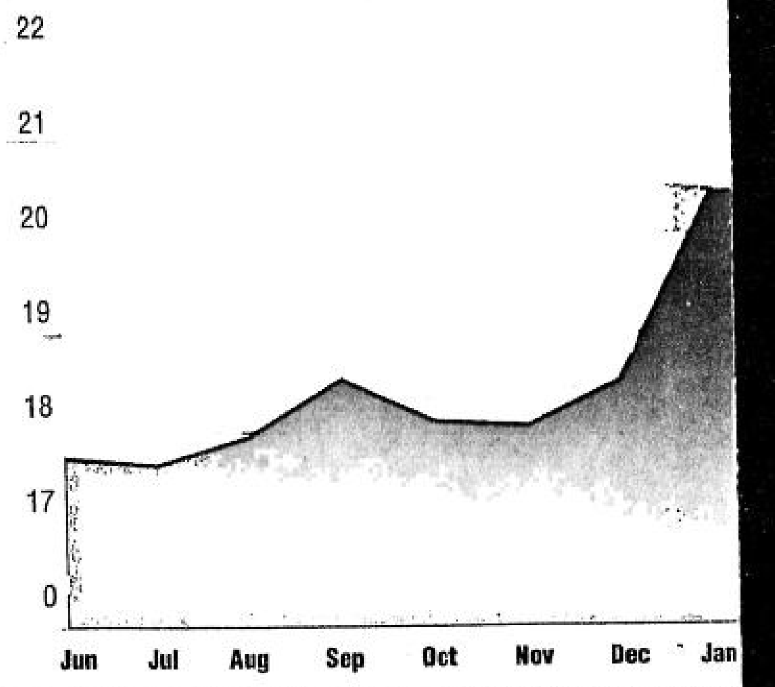
Emerging strength

Nine years after the currency turmoil that depressed asset prices across the region—particularly in Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Indonesia and South Korea, Southeast Asia has emerged much stronger and wiser but still isn't completely immune to potentially contagious shocks, financial experts said.

The strong buildup of foreign reserves was always being cited as among the factors behind the higher optimism on the region.

Since May, however, there was a shift in risk appetite among foreign investors away from emerging markets due to expectations of further increases in US interest rates.

Gross international reserves
June 2005 to June 2006, in billion US$



'Nicole' fails to show up, suffers another breakdown

From page A1

Emilie Fe de los Santos.

It was the first deferment in the landmark trial where four US Marines stand accused and which the court intends to speed up in view of the "one-year deadline" imposed by the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement.

The accord states that the US government, through its embassy in Manila, is obliged to present the accused only for a year from the start of judicial proceedings.

Addressing the court, De los Santos said Nicole would be back on Monday.

But the government lawyer said the prosecution might also call back on Tuesday Dr. Raquel Fortun, a leading forensic pathologist, whose credentials as an "expert witness" were accepted by the court in a ruling issued on Thursday.

2nd time

It was only the second time Nicole failed to attend the six-week-old trial with hearings held four days a week.

"I just assessed she was not in a condition to go," private prosecutor Evalyn Ursua told the INQUIRER when reached later on the phone.

Ursua was also a no-show as she was the one assigned to transport Nicole to court.

"It's more emotional than anything. Stress and fatigue. She was really committed and wanted to go, but both of us decided [not to proceed]," Ursua said.

According to Ursua, what happened to her client is "not surprising" for victims of crime, especially rape, who are being made to recount their ordeal in court.

Speaking to court reporters, Nicole's therapist Dr. June Pagaduan-Lopez said her patient emerged "traumatized" from her first three hours at the stand on Thursday.

"This is what a victim goes through," Lopez said, adding that Ursua informed her of Nicole's condition by phone, while lawyer and client were on their way to the Makati RTC.

Exhausted

Ursua said Nicole had admitted to her that she was "exhausted and tired" from Thursday's hearing, during which the 22-year-old complainant broke down four times on direct examination, forcing repeated suspensions of the hearing.

At the stand, Nicole reacted emotionally even to questions not related to the alleged rape.

She wept at the mention of her deceased father, and again when she was asked to relate the kindness of her family to visiting US soldiers who frequented the family-owned canteen in Zamboanga City.

Pozon adjourned the hearing an hour ahead of schedule when Nicole continued to weep while recalling her first encounter with her alleged rapist, Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith, on the night of Nov. 1, 2005.

Ursua said yesterday that Nicole was able to get some sleep on Thursday night, but that "it was a disturbed one."

Lopez said Nicole was under medication for a week in April, taking antidepressants.

Long way to go

Reminded of the one-year deadline under the VFA, Ursua said yesterday's postponement was hardly a setback for the prosecution.

"We still have a long way to go [before deadline], and there will be ample time for Nicole to take a rest," she said.

Pozon had earlier ruled that the one-year period contemplated in the VFA started on Dec. 27, 2005, when the case was originally raffled off at the Olongapo City RTC.

While the trial can proceed after that period has elapsed, the US government shall no longer be obliged under the VFA to present its accused citizens for investigative and judicial proceedings in the Philippines.

But Ursua explained that the countdown to the deadline was "suspended for 60 days" when the accused Americans petitioned the Department of Justice to review the findings of probable cause against them.

She also said that despite Nicole's failure to continue her testimony yesterday, the prosecution was not reconsidering its position to keep the hearings open to the public except during the delicate narration of the alleged rape itself.

"We thought it should remain that way for us to be transparent about what really happened to her, because some people already judged her quite harshly even before this trial began," Ursua said.

Sympathy

A member of the defense panel admitted on Thursday to taking pity on Nicole, particularly after seeing her weep several times at the stand.

"On the record, I have sympathy for her. I feel pity when I see her cry. That's why if I would still be cross-examining her, I don't want [the breakdowns] to happen as much as possible," Jose Justiniano, counsel for accused Lance Cpl. Keith Silkwood, told reporters.

"But it doesn't mean I already believe her story," he added.

Bush at 60: Getting older by the minute

From page A1

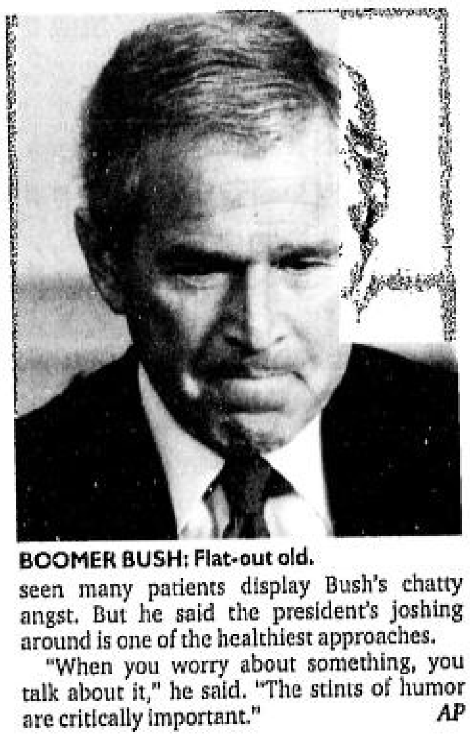
long day of meetings and public appearances, including a news conference with Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

The president received birthday greetings from Chinese President Hu Jintao and Russian President Vladimir Putin who talked with Bush on the phone Thursday morning about North Korea's missile tests.

A shock

In speech after speech, Bush has referred to himself as the "old president—getting older by the minute, by the way"; as one of "the gray-haired folks"; as "getting older"; and as just flat-out "old."

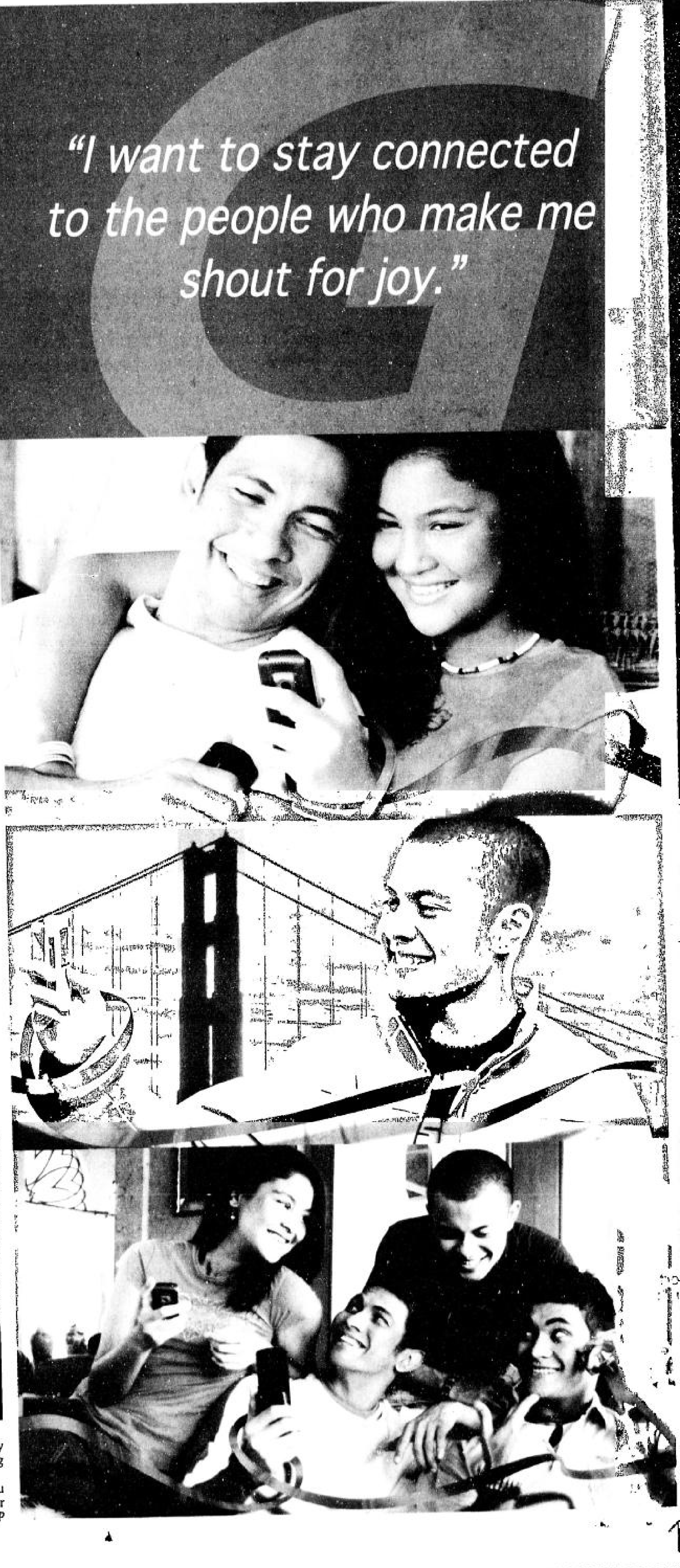
"For many boomers, turning 60 is a fairly significant shock," said Karl Pillemer, a professor of human development at Cornell University. "The generation that believed it would be young forever, clearly will not. ... The boomers are having a hard time with the existential reality of life not being one open-ended opportunity after another."

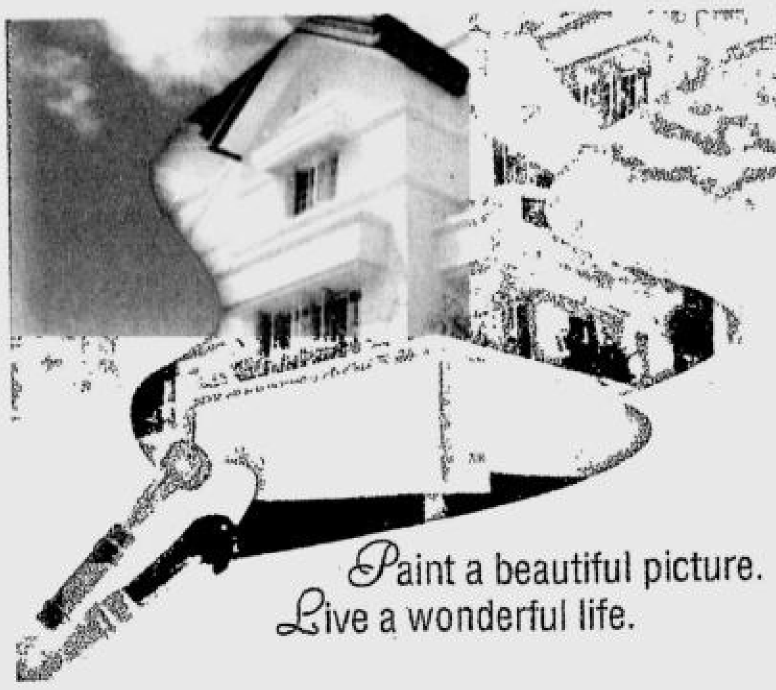


BOOMER BUSH: Flat-out old.

Dr. J. Edward Hill, the immediate past president of the American Medical Association and a family physician from Tupelo, Miss., has seen many patients display Bush's chatty angst. But he said the president's joshing around is one of the healthiest approaches.

"When you worry about something, you talk about it," he said. "The stints of humor are critically important." *AP*


"I want to stay connected to the people who make me shout for joy."



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Two women, two wars

EDITORIAL

ALL THE OOHING AND AAHING OVER WARREN Buffett's grand gesture of donating $37 billion to charity must have gotten to Imelda Marcos. So, she just had to match the world's second-richest man's philanthropy or even possibly raise the ante. But while Buffett put a price tag on his good deed, Marcos chose to leave it to others to imagine the scale of her generosity.

Still there can only be one word to describe her next enterprise: Imeldific.

The week Buffett announced to the world that he was giving away three-fourths of his $44-billion wealth, Marcos told Time magazine: "I'll come up with a project that will wipe out poverty here in two years. I want to remove the people from economic crisis by using the Marcos wealth. Long after I'm gone, people will remember me for building them homes and roads and hospitals and giving them food."

If Marcos pulls it off, that would perhaps be one of the greatest economic miracles the world has ever seen. In 2003 when the last survey was done, one out of every four Filipinos lived below the poverty line, according to the National Statistical Coordination Board. That meant a total of 23.8 million people couldn't scrape up the P34 they needed daily for their food, clothing and other necessities. With no dramatic changes occurring in the last three years, it can be assumed that the ranks of the poor have swelled by a couple of hundred thousands or so in the meantime. And that is the number of people Imelda Marcos promises to rescue from poverty in two years' time.

But Marcos, who once boasted that her family owned practically all of the country's blue-chip companies, has no doubts about her family's capacity to deliver on the promise. She said that even before her husband, Ferdinand Marcos, entered politics, he already had "tons and tons of gold." When Bill Gates (now the world's richest man) was still nothing but a college dropout, she said, "Ferdinand already possessed billions of dollars and tons of gold."

Fantastic? Some people, top officials of the Arroyo administration included, don't think so. On the contrary, it must have been such talk about fabulous riches in the Marcos family's possession that had PCGG Commissioner Ricardo Abcede drooling and panting for a compromise agreement that would absolve the Marcoses from any criminal liability for amassing ill-gotten wealth during the dictator's 20-year reign. With the Marcos widow talking billions—in dollars yet—the agency that was established to recover the Marcos family's ill-gotten wealth promptly forgot about good government and focused on the commission.

To no avail. Now that Marcos has her latest inspiration, she has told the PCGG to forget about a settlement. And so everyone must now wait with bated breath for the promised miracle to unfold. Except that as Marcos herself has acknowledged, she appears to be "a bit touched in the head," to some people at least.

Maybe she is, but her two-year war on poverty actually looks saner than another war that another lady vowed to finish in exactly the same number of years: President Macapagal-Arroyo's war against the communist insurgency. Last month, Ms Arroyo announced that the government was done with talking with the communist National Democratic Front and was launching an "all-out war" against the New People's Army. Simultaneously she ordered the release of P1 billion to the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police to augment their fighting capacity.

Marcos could have told Ms Arroyo a thing or two about fighting the communists. One is that throwing P1 billion more to improve the war machine and adding a few battalions won't win the war. Her husband spent billions and marshaled the entire AFP to crush the communist rebels and ended up 17 years later with a much wider and stronger insurgency. Second is that the government is committing the same mistakes as the dictatorship not only by marching into war but by tolerating, if not abetting, the abduction and killing of leftist leaders and students, thus adding fuel to the insurgency.

While Marcos vows to win the war on poverty, hers is in fact the more effective strategy in the war against the communist rebellion. In fighting insurgency, nothing works better than improving the lives of those who have nothing to lose if they fight for change.

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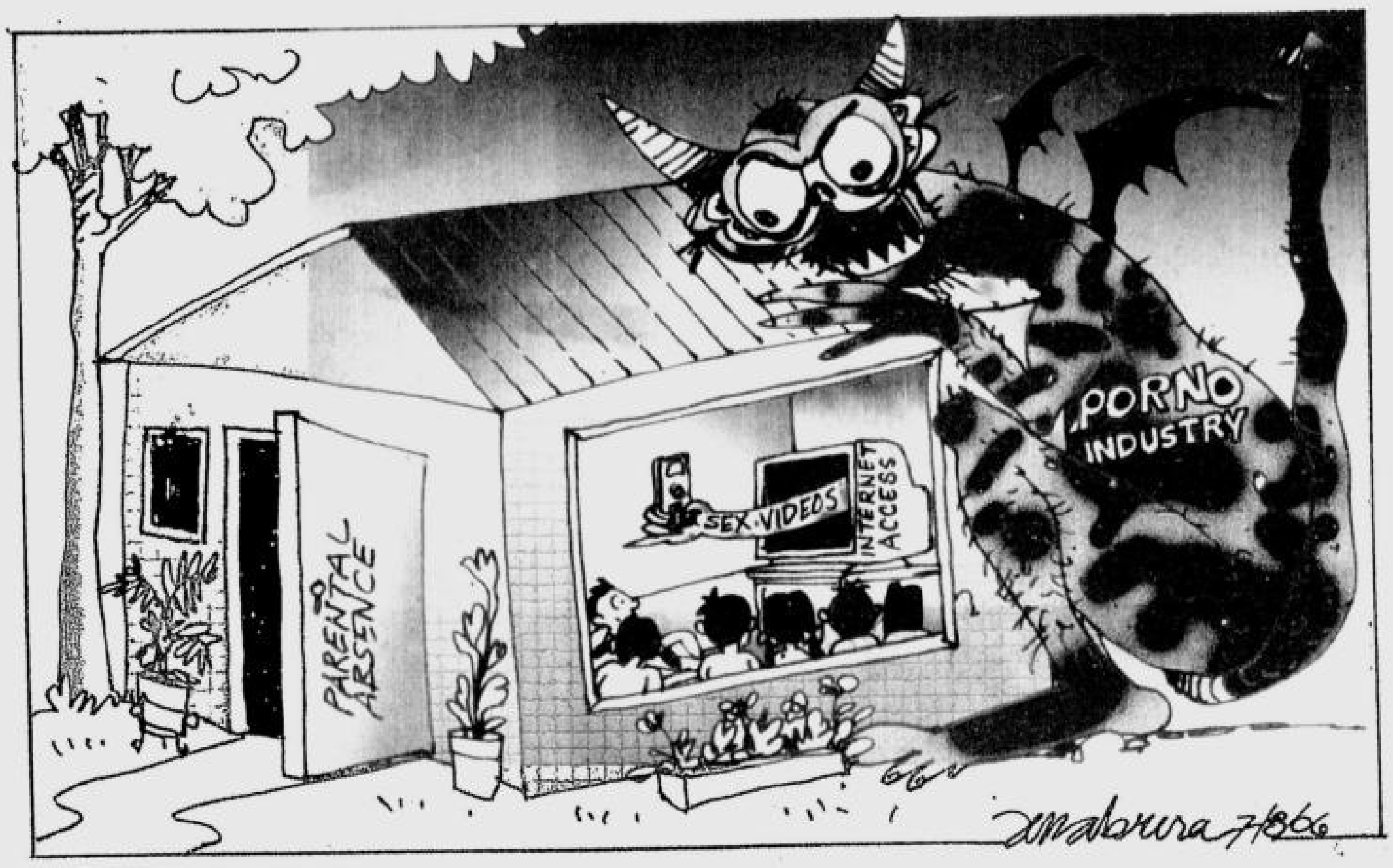

A political certainty

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

I CAN UNDERSTAND THE CLEVER MANEUvers of the Malacañang death squads to protect Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo from the several impeachment complaints that have been or will still be filed against her. Their vigilance is, of course, on her orders. They are strictly instructed to take every single step to defeat her impeachment again, which may not be as unsuccessful this year as it was last year.

All her forces are on red alert, from her legal strategists to her political satraps whose most compelling purpose is to insure their own survival as dependent on her durability as the claimed duly-elected leader of the nation. The sumptuous banquet they are now enjoying will disappear like a Barmecide feast if their hostess is deservedly evicted from the Palace of the People where she is sitting on a wobbly throne.

She is taking the posture of the injured innocent who is being harassed with absurd allegations without factual or legal basis. She protests that her foes are maliciously preventing her from discharging her urgent duties to protect the nation from its many serious problems. Instead of cooperating with her, they have opposed her at every turn with puerile gripes not worth considering or denying.

The charges against her are certainly not foolish. Her challenged acts constitute valid grounds for impeachment as culpable violation of the Constitution, bribery, graft and corruption, other high crimes and betrayal of public trust. In fact, her very title as President of the Philippines is the principal question being raised against her with the heavy evidence she has simply dismissed as already resolved and passé.

This blanket accusation covers all the other misdeeds imputable to her as the compelling excuse for her ejectment from the office she is unlawfully holding despite the resounding demand for her resignation.

There are none so deaf as those who will not hear, and Ms Arroyo is their leader. The cry for her removal is heard throughout the land, but all she hears is total silence. This is characteristic of the woman who ran for President in 2004 and did not choose to hear the ear-splitting reminder that she had solemnly sworn not to do so in 2003, before the monument of Rizal.

The decent thing she should do is face the serious charges against her like a man instead of evading them like a... coward. This artless dodging of the attacks against her integrity is unworthy of the sterling public official she professes to be.

If she really has nothing to hide and can refute all the charges against her as utter balderdash, she should welcome the formal investigation her critics are demanding. There she can try to expose their base motives as treasonous acts designed to undermine our democracy and surrender it to the enemies of our Republic.

When a person is attacked by a legislator under the protection of his parliamentary immunity, the usual reaction of the victim is to challenge his adversary to repeat his slanderous remarks outside the halls of Congress. The challenge is seldom met, which may be an indication of the falsity of the alleged misdeed. Ms Gloria cannot make a similar demand, of course. But she can allow the charges against her to be formally investigated in the Senate, where she will have the opportunity to prove, if she can, that they are mere mendacities.

This courageous stance will enable her to show the weakness of the attempts to force her removal and, no less importantly, to prove that she is worthy, by reason of her honest election and her blameless official acts, to be and remain the President of the Philippines. Moreover, such a statesmanlike voluntariness will lessen disharmony among our people, whatever be the judgment in her case, and enable us, as she herself would say, to go forward together to better times.

But she will not take this bold decision because it is fraught with peril to her real intentions. The truth is a fearful opponent. This is the reason she issued her EO 464 and PP 1017 preventing her subordinates from making damaging revelations in the legislative investigations of executive excesses and shortcomings. Although all but two of its members have not been appointed by her, the Supreme Court had no choice but to declare the measures unconstitutional.

To date, however, her underlings continue to evade the legislative probes on the ground that their motions for reconsideration have not yet been resolved with the usual "DF"—denied with finality.

Even now, the cheering squads of Glorifiers are already crowing that their opponents lack the needed one-third vote in the House of Representatives to impeach their deity and the two-thirds vote in the Senate to convict her. They say that the rout of the impeach-Gloria movement is not only a distinct probability but, indeed, a political certainty. Maybe so. But even unbelievable miracles can happen, like the manna from heaven that fed the famished pilgrims to the Promised Land.

Patriotism, true or false

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

"PATRIOTISM IS THE LAST REFUGE OF A scoundrel." This line, attributed to Samuel Johnson, came to mind when I read the remarks made by self-styled patriot Roy Señeres (who was quoted in this paper as saying: "What we did was patriotic, not illegal"). Johnson, it must be pointed out, was not indicting true patriotism, but false patriotism. So the logical question is, under which category do Señeres and the people he claims to have worked with fall?

Before we can answer that, let's make sure we know the difference between true and false patriots. "On July Fourth, real v. false patriotism," a piece I downloaded from the Internet, provides some interesting distinctions, to wit (numbering mine):

1. False patriots would rather play on your emotions—or beat up their political enemies—with empty slogans and false choices ... they would rather exploit love of country for political advantage than appeal to love of country for the greater good .... That's because the greater good involves sacrifice, which real patriots are willing to make. False patriots hide behind patriotism to avoid it ....

2. False patriots believe the law is malleable, and that as long as patriotism is the excuse, the law can be ignored. They are willing to exploit the Constitution itself for temporary political gain. Real patriots revere the Constitution, and believe no person is above the law ....

3. Real patriots, those who truly love their country, want to preserve the best of it and improve what can be. Real patriots don't exploit people's honest convictions, religious or otherwise, to divide people .... Real patriots are uniters. False patriots are dividers.

4. False patriotism is infected by partisanship and cynicism.

Another quote comes from an "Author Unknown":

5. "A true patriot does not love his government. The true patriot loves his COUNTRY and WATCHES his government."

If we accept those distinctions, or are willing to use them as criteria for distinguishing true from false patriotism, we should now be in a position to answer the question above. But there is some confusion that still has to be cleared up: the people Señeres named as having worked with him in committing the patriotic act—a plot to depose President Macapagal-Arroyo, which involved a call for the military to withdraw support from her, then the installation of a transition government—are none too eager to acknowledge their participation.

They (apparently, including Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, who submitted an affidavit to the National Bureau of Investigation) have in fact categorically denied any involvement. That videotape makes it rather difficult for Lim to sustain that denial. But with respect to the others—A. Cojuangco, O. Orbos R. De Villa, J. Zobel—it's a he-says-they-say situation, with no hard evidence presented. (Señeres is very fond of saying "I know for a fact," and then making an assertion.) Whether he is or they are the ones lying is at this point a matter of pure conjecture. So in the interest of fairness, we should just limit the question to Señeres and Danilo Lim. Are they true or false patriots?

Going through those criteria, one tends to get mixed signals: On the "false" side, one sees a lot of appeal to the emotions, false choices, willingness to ignore the law, exploitation or misuse of the Constitution, division. At the same time, one sees very little sacrifice. On the "true" side, there does not seem to be any partisanship or cynicism. There is definitely no love for, but a lot of watching of the government.

The crunch issue has to do with love o country. Does that attempt to depose the President show love of country? Here is where on has serious doubts. The objective of thei "withdrawal of support" was "to end her unconstitutional and illegal occupation of th presidency." They also cited her mad desire fo power "that has led to corruption and destruction of all institutions, including the Suprem Court, the Commission on Elections, the mas media, some members of the military, the police and the clergy," plus the teachers wh counted the vote in the 2004 elections. That's long bill of particulars, without citing ev dence.

But let us assume that these are all true, an that "withdrawal of support" and deposing Ms Arroyo are justified, does the formation of transition government or council—with men bers chosen by Lim et al., in blatant disregar of the constitutionally mandated law of succe sion—show love of country and an intent promote the greater good?

That's where their "patriotism" is unmaske for what it truly is: a naked grab for power, disregard for the Constitution and the law, deliberate substitution of the people's choi with their own choice (the I-know-better-tha the-people-what's-good-for-them syndrome)

Their naked attempt to grab power was n only aimed at Ms Arroyo but at the peop themselves; it was at the same time an a against the people, using arms supplied them by the people.

At least Señeres admitted that he was i volved in the plot (proud of it, even—whi goes to show how easy it is to rationalize). Li lied about it. This man, so greatly admired many, seems not to have outgrown his pe chant for military adventurism—all under t guise of idealism and love of country—a doesn't have the courage to admit it.

Of course, if everyone else were judged u der these criteria, many would fail. Pretendi to love their country, when all they love themselves. Scoundrels.

Déjà vu all over again

COMMENTARY

John J. Carroll, S.J.
Institute on Church and Social Issues

"MARCOS FLAYS PULPIT POLITICS."

The headline jumped at me from a clipping filed away almost 30 years ago. Yet it had a contemporary ring in view of the current hullabaloo about the Church's "meddling in politics."

In other ways also, the present situation recalls that of the 1970s and early 1980s. We find the government branding its critics as "leftists," much as Marcos tried to convince the world that "all of my enemies are communists." Moreover, as the Catholic hierarchy becomes more critical of the administration, we find the President hurrying off to Rome to receive the Pope's blessing and to claim his support, as Imelda Marcos did on more than one occasion. Again we find the President's supporters selectively quoting a papal encyclical supposedly "infallible" (a ridiculous claim for anyone who knows any theology), just as the Marcos people cited a Roman document written in very different circumstances to "prove" that Catholics were obliged to vote in one of Marcos' sham elections. More importantly, the continuing murders of "leftists" and the government's inability or unwillingness to put an end to them, recall the "salvaging" of the Marcos years.

Interestingly, those most loudly insisting on the separation of Church and State appear to have exceedingly short memories. Have they forgotten the photographs of the swearing in of President Macapagal-Arroyo on Jan. 20, 2001, at the Edsa Shrine, with Jaime Cardinal Sin standing close to her? Or the facts that without the cardinal's very vocal support, the impeachment case against her predecessor would never have gotten off the ground, nor would the momentum have been sustained that led to her succession?

Going back a bit further, they might recall the Philippine bishops' "pastoral exhortation" before the "snap election" of 1986 which warned that those who might try to subvert the election by fraud or violence would sin gravely and "make themselves unworthy of the Body of the Lord."

Again in their "post-election statement," the bishops gave their considered opinion that the election had failed, stated that if this were true, the election gave no moral right for the administration to continue in power, and called on the people to evaluate the situation and, if they found the bishops' judgment on the facts to be correct, then to take steps to right the wrong that had been done. Finally, there was the crucial support of the hierarchy to the newly installed and shaky regimes of both Cory Aquino and Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. If this was meddling, most Filipinos would say, "Thank God for it."

What then are we to make of it all? First, there is no "infallible" teaching on relations between Church and State. These relations evolved over time to the point at which Pope John Paul II spoke of the Church valuing "the democratic system inasmuch as it ensures the participation of citizens in making political choices, guarantees to the governed the possibility both of electing and holding accountable those who govern them, and of replacing them through peaceful means when appropriate." ("Centesimus Annus," No. 40)

The present Pope adds that while it is not the right nor the duty of the Church to replace the State, yet it "cannot and must not remain on the sidelines in the fight for justice." ("Deus Est Caritas," No. 28) The primary responsibility of the hierarchy is to "proclaim the message and, welcome or unwelcome, insist on it" as Paul ordered his disciple. (2 Tim. 4:2)

Pope Benedict XVI and those before him have also insisted that it is the primary responsibility of the lay faithful to be active in the political arena, while the bishops provide a moral center and a center of unity. This the Philippine bishops attempted to do in their "Post-Election Statement" of February 1986, in which they provided the moral principles and gave their own estimate of the facts, but left to the people the decision as to what was to be done.

Yet, when the institutions which should protect the people are subverted and the whole nation is in crisis, a Church which claims to speak for justice and human rights cannot not be actively involved. This realization struck me vividly during those days at Edsa in February of 1986. I carried with me a little transistor radio and periodically tuned in to Radio Veritas which, despite having had its transmitter destroyed by Marcos' allies, was still broadcasting instructions to the crowd by means of borrowed transmitters. Occasionally, I tuned in also to a non-Catholic religious station, and found it playing only music! Perhaps my judgment was unfair, but at the time this struck me as a statement of irrelevance; its Gospel, it seemed, had nothing to say to a people in crisis.

Cardinal Sin and others saw this and took the lead. The people responded with two nonviolent revolutions.

Today the nation faces a situation in which the structures which are intended to support the participation of citizens and the accountability of those who govern—key values of democracy, according to Pope John Paul II—have been undermined and have lost credibility. One thinks of the Commission on Elections, the oversight powers of Congress, the impeachment process and the Office of the Ombudsman. The bishops cannot stand on the sidelines in the face of these threats. Especially because at the heart of the storm is someone whom the hierarchy itself helped to put in power.

Crazy vow

YOUNG BLOOD

Steffy

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

A HUGE PART OF MY LIFE STARTED WITH A PROMISE I made to my dad. In our family chronicle, women have always been regarded as fragile and needing protection. Daughters are guarded, not in the physical sense, but with regard to their social and emotional involvement because of a long history of early pregnancies, elopements and untimely marriages. The contract I had with my dad thus made him smile from ear to ear.

It was a really serious and extremely courageous commitment to make. And when I told him I would do it, I had no idea that committing myself to a promise not to fall in love while in a college could be torture.

When I entered the campus of the University of the Philippines, Los Baños, I was determined to become a successful student. I told myself I would go to my classes 10 minutes early, spend weekends in the library doing assignments and papers in advance and hang out in fast-food chains only to discuss with classmates the week's lessons. Then I would join my friends to watch good movies, release my passions on extra-curricular activities and take pictures of myself waving in historical places. Little did I know that my new environment would make it very hard for me to fulfill the deal I struck with my dad.

I met good guys in college, and I was thankful for it because about 90 percent of them were genuinely kind and pleasant, although I cannot say I was really grateful for having so many temptations. I enjoyed driving around with one cute musician who drew lots of women toward him without even trying. I often played with a charming athlete who could be any girl's crush. And I had an extremely fun guy best friend whom any girl would have been proud to have as a full-time beau.

The UPLB campus, with its beautiful views and lush greens, is a recreation of romantic scenes straight from the movies. Countless times I would walk on fallen white petals and golden brown leaves and feel the cool breeze from the mountain envelope me. My heart would leap at the thought that such moments were perfect for sharing with someone. And every time I had this sentimental seizure, I would respond to prospective relationships by sending cute quotes on my mobile phone to a close guy friend (although now I feel embarrassed that I ever did such things).

It would have been nice to sit in a café, talking endlessly with him about how interesting life can be. On special occasions, it would have been exhilarating to receive beautiful letters professing overflowing love. I would have felt safer if someone was watching over me. Lunches would have been more delightful if he had ordered my favorite food for me. And it would have been dreamlike to fall under the spell of the stars under the clear night sky with him beside me.

But all these I missed because of an oath I now can't believe I took seriously.

Still, the reality of my situation was that I spent my time the way I wanted to without anybody telling me I couldn't do this or that. I got to go to hot springs and got drowned in rides in an amusement park without having to drag anybody with me. I got to give my smile to any guy I liked, without a jealous somebody nagging me afterwards. I enjoyed studying and group meetings without being distracted by worries about where somebody was. I got to give a lot of time to my girl friends and filled my memories with the most fun times of my life.

There were indeed a lot of things I missed because I made that promise to my dad, but when I think about it, I could have missed a lot also if I hadn't. Unfortunately because of that promise and my struggle to remain single, people found me odd. (If they knew my real reason, they would have considered me even more unusual.)

But then I remember my dad saying, "Almost one-fourth of your life you get to spend for yourself, and the rest of the time you do everything with someone else." Those words were my source of enlightenment and I have never regretted the time I gave to myself alone.

I cannot say I am an exemplary daughter because I made such a difficult promise and kept it in spite of all the temptations and the sacrifices it required. Struggling not to have a boyfriend while in college was no joke, especially because I was thousands of kilometers away from home. What kept me going was my belief that I had nothing to give my parents but the assurance that even when they were not looking, I would still be a good girl. Having kept my word, I truly believe I was.

Steffy, 23, works in an advertising agency.

We are all Nicole

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

DURING THE RECENT OBSERVANCE OF PHILIPPINE-American Friendship Day, there was no lack of commentators pointing out the irony that the No. 1 "example" of Fil-Am relations today is the ongoing trial for the rape of a young Filipina by four US Marines.

Even as the country's high and mighty were trooping through security check-points at the US Embassy for the Fourth of July celebration, lawyers on both sides of the case were prepping for the testimony of "Nicole," the 22-year-old native of Zamboanga who has accused four US servicemen of rape during a vacation in Subic.

What Nicole had to say corroborated much of what had already been said by others. But since the story was coming directly from her, it must have been so much more dramatic and poignant from a first-person point of view. In fact, Nicole is reported to have broken down four times in the course of her three-hour testimony.

Her story conveys a lot of the confusion she must have felt at the club that night, especially since she admits to having had one drink too many. She said she remembers dancing with some servicemen, some of whom looked familiar to her while others were total strangers, and then being dragged out of the club by a Marine she identified as Cpl. Daniel Smith, the same man she identified as later "lying on top of me ... (and) kissing me."

* * *

WHEN the story first broke out last November, observers raised questions about Nicole's "innocence," asking what a nice girl like her was doing inside a club, drinking heavily and dancing with American soldiers.

During her testimony Thursday, Nicole attempted to explain the level of comfort she felt with American servicemen and why she had let her guard down that night. She was used to hanging around with American soldiers, she explained, and was in fact managing the canteen her family owned inside a military camp, which was frequented by American soldiers taking part in military exercises. "We treated them like family. We treat them well so that they will not feel homesick," she explained.

So comfortable were she and her family around American soldiers that when she and two of her sisters were invited by a family friend, US Navy Petty Officer Christopher Mills, to a vacation in Subic, they agreed to go, though they insisted on paying for their plane fare.

Other Filipinas might be leery of being seen with American servicemen, especially in Subic and Olongapo, for fear of being mistaken for sex workers. But Nicole had no such prejudice or reason to fear the Americans. Mingling and making friends with soldiers were normal for her, and since no one had abused the friendship they offered, she had no reason to keep them at arm's length. So when a Marine she didn't know grabbed her arm and asked her to dance with him, she agreed but only after Mills silently nodded—a signal that she could trust the Marine.

* * *

IN A REPORT in this paper, Dr. June Pagaduan-Lopez, who provides counseling support for Nicole and her family, surmised that Nicole may have found the testimony "painful" not only because it forced her to re-live the events of that night but also because "she felt betrayed."

Was Nicole in fact naïve in the extreme in traveling to Subic at the invitation of a serviceman friend? Was she reckless in downing drink after drink offered by Mills to her and her sister while they were out having a good time? And could her possibly inebriated state have led the accused Marines to believe she was willing to have sex with one—or all—of them?

As far as I know, naiveté is not a crime, nor is recklessness. And if every young woman who gets soused and wasted in the course of a good time deserves to be raped, then we would rack up rape statistics far worse than South Africa's.

Doesn't Nicole's story just make you want to tear up? In many ways, we are all like Nicole in our relations with Americans: naïve, trusting in their innate goodness, blind to their human frailties—or geo-political pragmatism, but, unlike Nicole, intimidated into silence and passivity.

True, our relations with the United States have undergone a major revamp through the decades, especially after the termination of the bases agreement. But even today, in crafting our foreign policies and in interpreting the Visiting Forces Agreement, we tend to bend over backwards to accommodate the Americans, and rush to satisfy their demands and interests.

* * *

THANKS to the policy of benevolent assimilation, Filipinos of this and previous generations have always related to Americans and the American government in much the same way that Nicole and her family dealt with the American servicemen frequenting their canteen.

We assumed they could be trusted. We believed that they had our interests in mind when they asked us to be their allies. And even when we were led into dangerous ventures—such as sending troops to Korea, Vietnam and Iraq—we justified the risk by saying we would at least be amply compensated by our wealthier friends.

And when they abused our hospitality—by locking Filipinos out of our own territory, as they did with the bases they maintained; and aiding, abetting and even financing the growth of sex industry centers clustered around the bases—we still looked the other way and said that in the long term, we benefited economically from the bases.

We did have our "Nicole-moment." That day when the Philippine Senate voted to reject the RP-US bases agreement. But even that resounding victory for the nationalist cause would ultimately be eroded by the VFA and the continuing presence of the American military on our soil. Which just goes to show that when Americans want to f—k with you, they'll f—k you any which way.

North Korea and Asia's widening arms race

WORLD VIEW

Hideaki Kaneda

NORTH KOREA'S TEST OF A LONG RANGE MISsile may have failed, but that will not relieve regional jitters. It will only confirm what is already underway—an arms race across Asia.

Most Southeast Asian countries are busily modernizing their armed forces. So far, most have done so without compromising their autonomy in security matters. But, with China's military build-up causing nervousness everywhere, and with North Korea a perpetual source of insecurity, many governments in the region are starting to work with outside powers.

Indonesia's President Susilo Bambang Yudyohono has, perhaps, been the most assertive. In addition to becoming more active in world diplomacy, Yudyohono will meet Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow this month to discuss buying Russia's newest fighter jets. Indonesia is seeking to form an air-defense squadron of 12 jets, with eight Russian fighters to complement the two Russian Su-27SKs and Su-30MKMs that it has already bought.

Elsewhere in the region, Singapore has apparently opted to purchase 12 new F-15SG fighter aircraft from the United States. Thailand's Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, met Putin late last year and tentatively agreed to purchase 12 Su-30MKMs. Malaysia has agreed to buy 18 Su-30MKMs over the next two years, while Vietnam has purchased 36 SU-27SKs, 12 of which are already in service.

With the exception of Singapore, it seems that Russian fighter-attack aircraft are the region's weapon of choice at the moment. Russia's growing slice of the local arms market worries the United States, the world's biggest weapons supplier and still Asia's greatest military power. Thus, for example, last November, the United States lifted its six-year embargo on military sales to Indonesia. The embargo was imposed in 1999 in response to human rights abuses in East Timor. Indonesia immediately expressed its intention to purchase C-130 transport aircraft, as well as fast patrol boats to conduct "anti-terrorism and anti-piracy measures."

Yet, Indonesia is also trying to align itself with Asia's rising power, China, by seeking greater defense and security cooperation. As a result of these improved relations, Indonesia has received Chinese short-range missile technology.

The possibility that Southeast Asia's governments might begin to play America and China off against each other is among the concerns that most animate the latest US quadrennial defense review, which is intended to "focus on the Pacific Ocean" in awareness of China's growing naval power. Undoubtedly, the United States will try to build closer ties with Indonesia through greater military cooperation, because Indonesia borders the region's key sea lanes.

In particular, Indonesia will inevitably become involved in the tug-of-war between the United States and China for influence over the vitally important Malacca Strait. Because China must import vast quantities of oil through the Malacca Strait, that sea lane has become a central element in the country's security strategy. For this reason, China is attempting to use economic and military aid as leverage to improve relations even with countries with which it has had military confrontations in the past, like Vietnam and the Philippines.

India is now joining the military build-up. It has actively led regional multilateral joint exercises, such as the naval joint exercise that India's navy hosted in the Andaman Sea, in the eastern Indian Ocean, earlier this year. Nine Asian-Pacific countries took part, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.

Both India and China are seeking greater influence over the strategically important country of Burma (Myanmar). For example, after Burma signed in 2005 an agreement to supply China with natural gas, India responded by cutting its own gas deal with Myanmar.

South Korea has, of course, joined the scramble. President Roh Moo-hyun visited Malaysia and agreed to expand mutual economic cooperation mainly in information technology, bio-technology and energy. Roh reportedly also discussed exporting defense materials worth $2.3 billion, including training aircraft, destroyers and armed vehicles. Moreover, in January 2006, Korean Defense Minister Yoon Kwang-ung agreed with the Philippines to deliver two used patrol boats.

In this crowded power play, only Japan is left out, choosing for the most part to remain aloof and cultivate its relations with the United States, which is now to supply anti-missile technology to counter the North Korean threat. But, despite the deep historical animosity generated by World War II, there are increasing calls in the region for Japan to expand its influence to counterbalance China. In reality, Japan is not ready for this, because it still strongly adheres to "self-imposed restraints" against "influence over other countries in security and defense," including weapons exports.

In the 1960s, as its economic takeoff was proceeding, Japan initiated a serious dialogue with regional players, aiming to build stronger relations with countries that it had once conquered and occupied. It is no overstatement to say that those efforts, which boosted trade and investment in the region, formed the foundation of Japan's national power today. But now Japan's political and economic influence in Southeast Asia is gradually declining, owing in part to its failure to exert influence over security and defense matters.

At a time of regional uncertainty about North Korea and China—including the looming prospect of China's first aircraft carrier—Japan's participation in the evolving Asian security framework is fundamental to stability. The time when Japan could remain on the sidelines is over.

Project Syndicate

Hideaki Kaneda, a retired vice admiral of Japan's Self Defense Forces, is director of the Okazaki Institute in Tokyo.

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THEY SAID

Excess supply

"We aren't suffering from a shortage of overly ambitious politicians and so I prefer not to add to the excess supply."

—Sen. Francis Pangilinan, brushing off speculations that he is aspiring to become President

Solved

"Simply filing a murder case is not the same as solving it."

—Ann Cooper, executive director of New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists, in a letter to the President, regarding the killing of journalists in the Philippines

Body and soul

"Jesus became a man and in becoming a man he assumed a body, taking care not only of souls but also of the bodies."

—New Papal Nuncio Archbishop Fernando Filoni, saying it is the duty of the Church to speak out on issues that concern the people

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Anti-graft fund not enough

AS AN ORDINARY CITIZEN OF this country who sacrificed so much to send my six sons and three daughters to college, I see no logic in President Macapagal-Arroyo's move setting aside P1 billion for the fight against graft and corruption.

Everybody knows that this social cancer, which eats up almost 30 percent of the people's money, is deeply rooted in our system, and no amount of money will be enough to eradicate it. Unless the administration is sincere in running after the rotten apples in government, the P1 billion will only go to the pockets of the corrupt.

With countless families living in hunger and more than 200,000 children roaming the streets for a living, it would be better to allocate that amount to a livelihood program that would alleviate their sufferings.

And in order to totally eradicate graft and corruption in government, this administration should pursue without letup its lifestyle check on all officials and employees, whether or not they are close relatives of the powers-that-be.

Charter change is not a remedy to the alarming problem of graft and corruption. The merging of the executive and legislative powers in a unicameral parliamentary system of government will only do away with the time-honored check-and-balance principle that rein in co-equal branches of government from abusing power; it will only nurture this decades-old social cancer.

—TRINIDAD ESTURAS-PETEZA,
JP Rizal Street,
Barangay Camambugan,
Daet, Camarines Norte

Correcting mistakes will be better for high court

ON NEAL H. CRUZ'S COLUMN on the Supreme Court's fallibility (PDI, 6/14/06), may I say that it's about time—in fact, it's long overdue—that the Court admitted its errors and corrected them. Admitting a mistake is not a sign of weakness but of noble character. No one, individual or institution, should perpetuate mistakes like those mentioned by Cruz.

The Court's reluctance, if not aversion, to correct its own errors is rooted, as I see it, in pride, if not self-righteousness. Many perceive the tribunal as an ivory tower from where pronouncements are made as if ex cathedra.

Take its decisions on BP 22 (bouncing checks law). It has been the Court's consistent ruling that the intent or good faith of the drawer/issuer of a check is immaterial insofar as violations of the statute are concerned. In one case, it declared loud and clear: "(T)he history of the enactment of subject statute evinces the definite legislative intent to make the prohibition all embracing ... all without distinction as to the purpose of the issuance of the checks."

The violation of BP 22, said the Court, is *malum prohibitum*; thus, intent or good faith is not a defense. This is wrong because the legislative intent is just the opposite. Pertinent portions of the deliberations on then Cabinet Bill No. 9 show that "good faith which would negate the intent to commit the prohibited act" is a defense.

Take, for another, the Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE) which the Court has imposed on lawyers, particularly private practitioners, regardless of age and physical condition.

This is not a brief against the Court, which has recently reined the dictatorial tendencies of the de facto Arroyo administration, with its laudable decisions on PP 1017, EO 464, and CPR. This letter is written in the hope that, as earlier stated, the Court will soon correct its own mistakes—for the good of all concerned. It's never too late to do it, and the Supreme Court will be better for it.

—MAXIMINO NOBLE III,
3/F Prudential Bank Bldg.,
Chino Roces St., Makati City

Lamentable majority, unbelievable minority

I LAMENT THE DEAFENING SILENCE of the majority of Filipino youth amid the grinding poverty, graft and corruption in government, moral decline, destruction of cultural treasures and the suppression of basic rights in our country. I can't believe that only a minority of our countrymen are appalled by the evils now stalking our land.

Someone should remind us that to be nationalistic is not only to be anti-imperialist. It also means being vigilant and being advocates of truth.

We call on all Filipino youth who are afraid to air what they feel about our country to stand up and fight the evils in the government! May our Lord God provide us with everything we need to destroy these evils and restore our nation.

—EDWARD FELIX M. DONATO,
Parañaque City

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Worthless P1B

THIS IS IN RELATION TO THE ARticle "Bishop questions P1-B boost to anti-Red drive." (PDI 06/18/06) Allocating P1 billion for the purchase of new equipment for the military will not solve the rising insurgency in the country.

President Macapagal-Arroyo will serve the nation much better if she uses that amount to feed the increasing millions of Filipinos who suffer from hunger due to government neglect. After all, the administration has a lot of catching up to do on the problems in education, health and other basic services.

The additional deployment of soldiers in certain parts of the country will only mean more human rights violations especially against indigenous peoples (IPs) whose communities in the hinterlands are considered by the military as NPA havens.

To date, more than 33,000 cases of human rights violations, including bombings, abductions, indiscriminate firing and killings have been documented. More than 80 of these were politically motivated and had as victims leaders of IPs—the latest of whom was Markus Bangit, a Kalinga peace pact holder and a mass leader of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA).

The IPs are wondering why the defense of their ancestral lands and their fight for survival have been criminalized and tagged as insurgent. Despite their call for genuine peace in their communities, the Philippine government remains deaf and silent.

A billion-peso project is worth nothing if it will not redound to the welfare of the people. If it would only lead to more human rights violations and the disappearance of IP tribes, then it does not deserve any support from the people.

—RODERICK CARPIO,
Kabataan para sa
Tribung Pilipino (Katribu),
Mapagbigay Street,
Barangay Central, Diliman, QC

Gridlocks our last best hope

"THE SENATE," INQUIRER'S JUNE 13 editorial, came as a timely reminder. The drumbeaters of Charter change don't seem to get it. They insist that in a unicameral parliamentary system: (1) elections will be less costly for both the country and the candidates themselves, (2) there will be less political accommodation and payback, and (3) gridlocks (between the two houses and between the legislature and the executive) will be eliminated, thus ensuring efficient governance and legislation.

On the surface, the argument may seem logical, especially because the unicameral system does away with the national elections and the tedious canvassing of votes. But it would be naïve for anyone to believe that a parliamentary system will put an end to political accommodation, horse-trading and payback. If you think these practices are rampant in the present system, they will run wild in a unicameral parliament.

On the other hand, Cha-cha advocates would have us believe that the gridlocks are the strongest argument for the unicameral parliamentary system. On the contrary, the gridlocks (or their likelihood) are the strongest argument for retaining the present system of three co-equal branches of government. Gridlocks prevent public officials from abusing their power; they whip abusive politicians back in line; they give back to the people the power that is rightfully theirs.

Ever wondered why the United States adopted a republican system with three co-equal branches of government? Henry G. Weaver, in his book "The Mainspring of Human Progress," explains why the founding fathers, alarmed by the plight of the peoples of the Old World and by the despotic regimes in Europe, chose to separate man's three powers of thinking, acting and deciding: the thinking was given to the legislature (divided into two chambers for further check and balance), the acting to the executive (for the implementation of the laws), and the deciding to the judiciary or Supreme Court as the final arbiter of questions of law. They decided for the separation of powers knowing that man and governments (which are run by men) fall prey to ambition and greed. The saying "Absolute power corrupts absolutely" was as true in their times as it is today.

Gridlocks are not the problem. In fact, they are our last best hope of ensuring that our elected officials will behave and put our interests before theirs. But Fidel V. Ramos, Jose de Venecia and Sigaw Ng "Bayad" spokesperson Raul Lambino don't seem to get this.

—MANNY MONTEALEGRE,
7 Greenfields St.,
Capitol Green Village,
Quezon City 1116

P1-B fund reassures businessmen

REGARDING THE ADDITIONAL P1 billion that the President has allocated for the government's campaign against insurgency, I, as a private individual with a small business, am concerned with revolutionary taxation.

The "revolutionary taxes" imposed by the leftists are a form of harassment. I know that the New People's Army torches the establishments of small businessmen who fail to give in to its demands. In some instances, the owners themselves are killed. This is one reason for us to support the government's drive against communists and other terrorist groups.

The P1 billion will be a real big help for the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police in their counterinsurgency drive. It somehow reassures innocent civilians and businessmen of better government protection from the NPA.

—SAYRE ESPULGAR,
serge1headliners@yahoo.com

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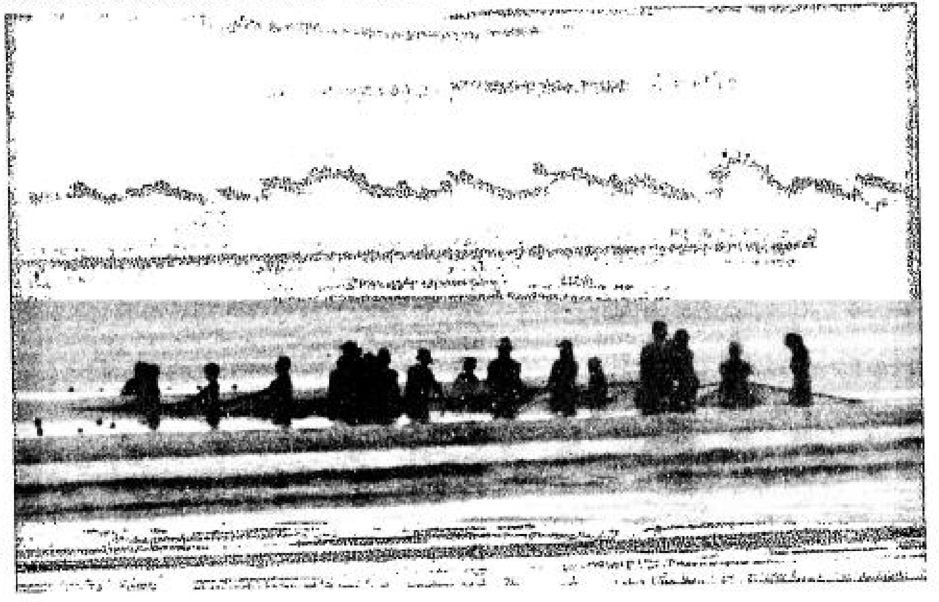
Sipalay *sojourns*

SIPALAYNON fishermen, above, pull their fishing nets early in the morning at Poblacion Beach and sell their catch at the nearby Sipalay City market. At right, while most people watch the sunset from a distance, the fishermen look as if they are out to catch the last rays. HAZEL VILLA



By Hazel P. Villa
Sipalay City, Negros Occidental

ON THE EDGE OF A MOUNTAIN overlooking the sparkling bay are dark blue, white and orange Mediterranean-type villas that give a romantic touch to a Visayan seascape dotted with islets, coves, beaches with sugar-like sand, and a hidden lake.

A drive through meandering roads leads to a natural lagoon, a cave and a mist-covered Banderahan Mountain that gives an all-encompassing view of the bays of Campomanes and Nabulao—with another mountain beside it, making out like snow-capped Mount Kilimanjaro with clouds hovering at the peak.

A backpacker or a high-end tourist will never run out of adventure and sightseeing options in the natural beaches, islets, highlands and even industries of Sipalay City in Negros Occidental, which is more famous as the home of Philex Gold Philippines, Inc. that closed in 2002 and Maricalum Mining Corp. that ended business a year before.

Under Mayor Oscar Montilla Jr., this fifth-class component city (annual income: P35 million to P70 million) is repositioning itself as the "Jewel of the Sugar Island" in spite of what mining had done since it started in 1957 and even with the forthcoming entry of Colet Mining Corp., which is currently doing exploratory drillings.

"The city's attitude is that mining in Sipalay is welcome but must conform to stringent environmental safeguards that will ensure that the city's people and its environment are protected from the damage Sipalay itself suffered in the past and the adverse consequences of mining operations that other localities are suffering at present," read the Sipalay City Master Development Plan.

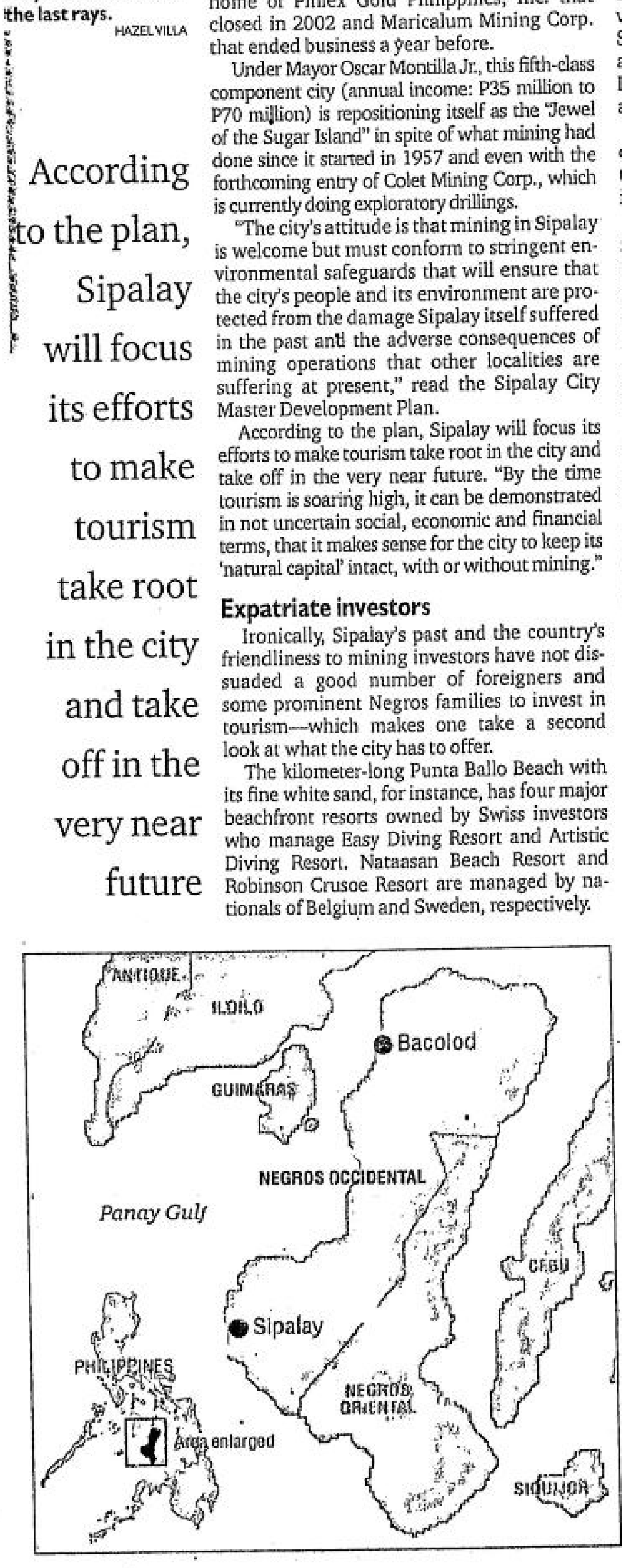
According to the plan, Sipalay will focus its efforts to make tourism take root in the city and take off in the very near future. "By the time tourism is soaring high, it can be demonstrated in not uncertain social, economic and financial terms, that it makes sense for the city to keep its 'natural capital' intact, with or without mining."

Expatriate investors

Ironically, Sipalay's past and the country's friendliness to mining investors have not dissuaded a good number of foreigners and some prominent Negros families to invest in tourism—which makes one take a second look at what the city has to offer.

The kilometer-long Punta Ballo Beach with its fine white sand, for instance, has four major beachfront resorts owned by Swiss investors who manage Easy Diving Resort and Artistic Diving Resort. Nataasan Beach Resort and Robinson Crusoe Resort are managed by nationals of Belgium and Sweden, respectively.

According to the plan, Sipalay will focus its efforts to make tourism take root in the city and take off in the very near future



These expatriates have married natives and told their friends of the innumerable attractions of the place. By word of mouth, these friends brought along other people. And so, Langub Beach of sugary sand is also dotted with resorts managed by some Filipinos, Swiss and Germans, such as Takatuka Beach and Dive Resort, Bermuda Beach Resort, Driftwood Village, Sulu Sunset Beach Resort, and Langub Beach Resort.

This second southernmost town of Negros Occidental that directly faces the northern area of the Sulu Sea and is 178.4 km from Bacolod City is slowly gaining a name as a tourism haven.

In the last week of March, it was adjudged grand winner of the Hiyas Ng Turismo, a nationwide search for new and undiscovered tourist destinations conducted by the Women in Travel Manila, in cooperation with the Department of Tourism.

Sipalay got 14,209 text votes, followed by Cavinti in Laguna with 5,182, and Sacobia, Pampanga, 2,145.

Tourist arrival figures have also reflected an ongoing interest in Sipalay. In 2003, visitors numbered 3,361 and in 2004, 9,311. Last year, 14,427 tourists visited the city.

Troy Gedang, the adventurous staff member of the mayor who serves as guide, said that if one wanted to enjoy Sipalay at a leisurely pace, two weeks would be just right while three days would simply be considered a whirlwind tour.

Mega-diverse attractions

No one can claim boredom in the coastal city where the first American submarine landed in Campomanes Bay to deliver arms and supplies to the forces commanded by airman-hero Col. Jesus Villamor during World War II.

Cool and calm Campomanes Bay, surrounded by mountains, is a must-see and must-do for the tourist with its coral gardens and shipwrecks, as well as for water activities, like diving, jetskiing, kayaking, banana boat rides and parasailing.

My friends and I, not exactly in the mold of swimming greats, did some snorkeling at Maasin Point near the mouth of the bay and nearby Habok-Habok Point, a marine sanctuary.

The clear water, schools of multicolored tropical fish, and attractive corals gave us the temporary illusion that we were doing some serious underwater diving until threatening rains came. We had to take cover in Punta Ballo Beach, whose resorts are accredited by the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (Padi). The city has 42 identified diving spots with hundreds more waiting to be discovered.

Serious divers may want to consider checking out the following wrecks among the many: MS Jojo, a two-mast freighter that sank in 1980 and now the playground of whale sharks, scorpions and batfish; SS Panay, an American warship sunk by Japanese torpedoes in March 1942; and Julien's Wreck, three small freight ships that ran aground Julien's Reef.

For leisurely sailing or kayaking, Tinagong Dagat or Hidden Lake is the place to be. Dozens of islets are covered with lush vegetation serving as some sort of appetizer before snorkeling, with patches of sea grass, smatterings of corals, and old-growth mangroves lining the shores.

Canturay Mangroves, comprising 40 hectares, in Sitio Dul-ungan, Barangay Canturay, is a boat ride of several minutes away from Langub Beach. It is a great example of mangrove reforestation with a swath cleared through for nature lovers on bancas to appreciate the varied species of mangroves planted way back in 1992.

Had we the time and only if the weather did not compromise more adventures, we could have gone to Mamara Cave in Barangay Mambaroto, which Troy avers is an attraction since it is a cathedral type of cave, has swifts and sparrows with nests in it, and an underground river channel.

With ominous rain clouds coming up, we settled for a visit to the three-hectare Malinab Lagoon—a giant sinkhole or underwater catch basin that is home to freshwater eels, *tilapia*, catfish and other fish species, as well as source of irrigation water for nearby rice fields.

After that, we drove up Banderahan Mountain, the highest in the area, which makes it a natural site for cellular companies to put up telecommunications facilities.

If you want to see typical mountain life in the Visayas, this must be the place. The higher we went, the cooler the air. Colorful flowers line the way, alternating with areas planted to corn and wild rice.

Photography buff that I am, I just had to stop and take pictures of the mist-covered mountains with the sun's rays trying to pierce the clouds covering the peaks, a child peeling corn with the hills as backdrop, and the couple with me on the first blush of love.

Hereabouts, life is slow and purposeful with your gaze broken by the occasional nipa hut, the farmer astride his carabao, or the wild mountain chicken crossing your path.

Sipalay is one of these few tourism-conscious towns with its own tourism center facing Poblacion Beach with four rooms, two of which are air-conditioned.

Urgent need

Although Cristine Mansinares, the city tourism operations officer, admits there is an urgent need for more tourism facilities and guides, Sipalay has not backed away from hosting major tourism events, such as the first Pasaway Adventure Challenge on March 26-27, with 15 teams coming from Negros Island participating in an adventure race with the city's tourism sites as control points.

On May 27-28, it hosted the first Sipalay City National Mountain Bike Race with nearly 150 participants.

While basically classified as an eco-tourism area because of yet-to-be-developed accommodations, Sipalay has selected lodgings for tourists of every color and stripe.

The high-end tourist who is a creature of comfort might want to consider Takatuka Lodge, managed by Swiss brothers Kalle and Marc Kalitta, with its whimsical architecture and the good food at Sugar Beach, and Easy Diving Beach Resort, owned by Christian Reinwald, at Punta Ballo Beach.

Backpackers can set up tent at the shoreline of Campomanes Bay or at the Poblacion Beach and eat at the many food stalls lining the 2-km beach.

If you have a thing for sunsets and typical Philippine life in coastal areas, Poblacion Beach is the perfect place.

Early mornings see the residents laboriously dragging fishnets to shore that they have scattered the sunset before. Women with their babies, and old folk sift through the fish catch that the able-bodied ones have gathered, while mere writers like me scout for that perfect photo angle and the words with which to paint the images of this spirited coastal city struggling to leave its mining past behind.

(Cristine Mansinares, Sipalay's tourism operations officer, can be reached at 0918-5173563 or e-mail: sipalaycity@yahoo.com)

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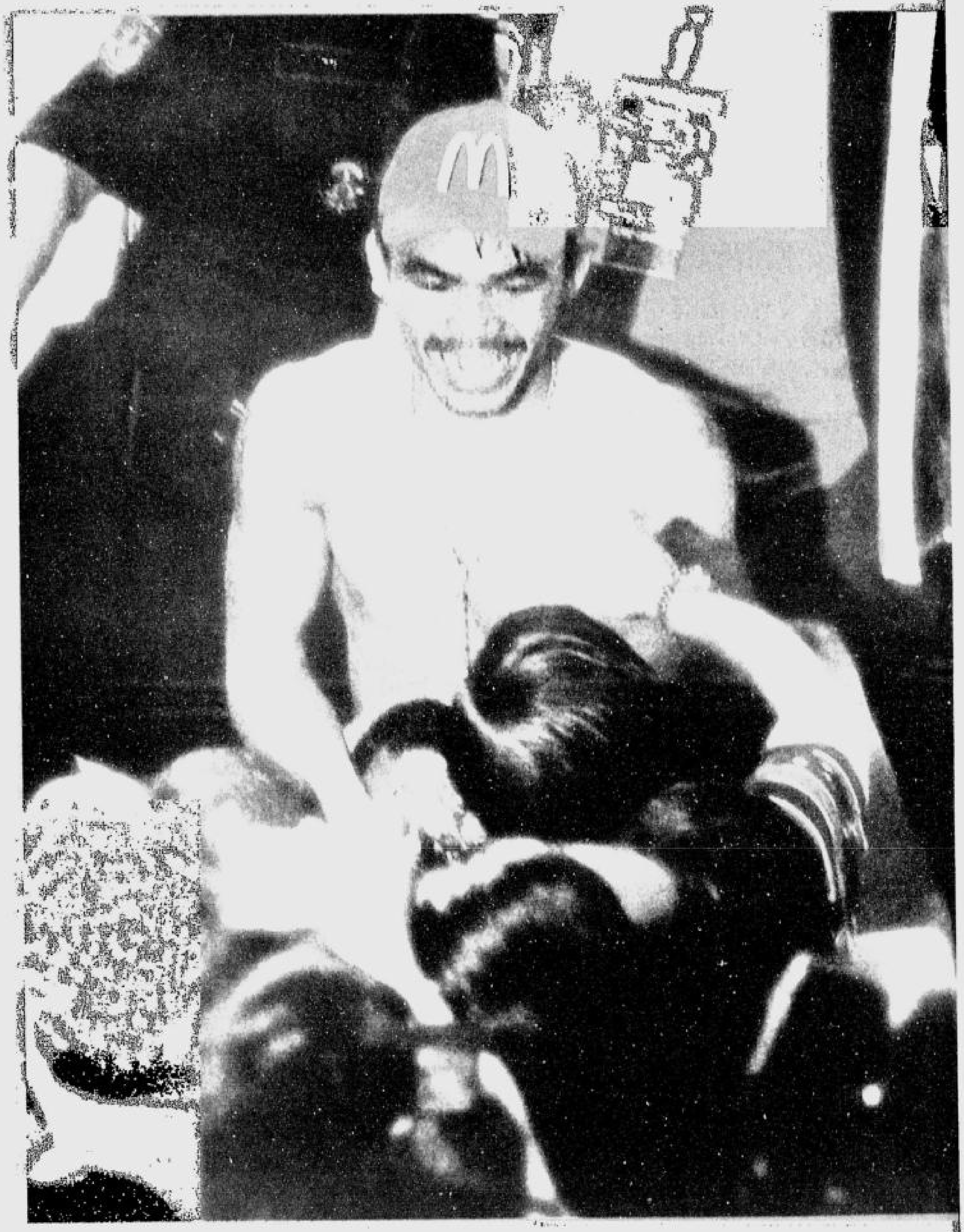

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Lafayette test run gets green light

RAPU-RAPU, ALBAY—THE DEPARTMENT OF ENvironment and Natural Resources removed the final roadblock for the conduct of a test run of the mining system of Australian firm Lafayette Phils. Inc. here.

Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes presided over the presentation here Friday of the validation report on the conditions set prior to the 30-day test run to start next week.

Reyes, however, said the test run is no guarantee that the mining operation would resume.

He said the government is concerned over safety, health and sanitation of communities near the mining site.

Reyes said the DENR, experts from the Chamber of Mines and people from the academe have been stationed at the mining site for the past weeks to monitor the implementation of the conditions set prior to the conduct of the test run.

Michael Cabalda, chief science research specialist of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau central office, said he is personally vouching for the safety measures that were put in place.

The DENR required LPI to put the safety measures in place with transparency. Validating mechanisms must be instituted and environmental measures must be adhered to based on existing standards.

The DENR also called for an improvement of the existing mine site laboratory for heavy metal analysis, the setting up of an emergency preparedness and response program, and the commissioning of a third party which will assess and start the process for ISO 14001 certification.

Reyes said he is now just awaiting the final recommendation of the Pollution and Adjudication Board to formally signal the start of the test run, which he said could be done even during the weekend if the company is willing to work.

Residents, the company's scholars, municipal and barangay officials and company employees and officials were jubilant after Reyes assured them of the conduct of the test run.

Lawyer Julito Sarmiento, Lafayette's director and corporate secretary, said the company had infused no less than P400 million just for the environmental safety program.

"This demonstrates the company's good faith and intention in putting everything in order to ensure safe and responsible mining," he said.

Sarmiento added that aside from the huge amount invested in the safety measures, the company is also losing at least $3 million in unrealized revenues every month during the past eight months that it has stopped operations. *Bobby Labalan, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Bishop, gov back test run of mines in Rapu-Rapu

SORSOGON CITY—TWO RANKing and influential leaders of the province had expressed support for the scheduled test run of the mining operation at the island of Rapu-Rapu in Albay province.

Gov. Raul Lee and Bishop Emeritus Jesus Varela both endorsed the test run saying it would determine whether or not the installed systems and other steps taken by the firm to make up for two spills last year would pass tests.

Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes was in the mining site yesterday to personally oversee the start of the 30-day test run.

It was the first time ever that Bishop Varela, the predecessor of antimining Bishop Arturo Bastes, came out in public with a statement about the mining issue in Rapu-Rapu.

Bastes was appointed head of a body that investigated the waste spills.

Varela said he sees no wrong in mining operations for as long as they comply with ethical concerns such as safety of the environment, community and those involved in the mining operation themselves.

Mining

He said mining is one important industry that must be given a chance to grow as it would greatly help in economic development.

Bishop Varela's stand was directly opposed to the stand of his successor, Bishop Bastes, who headed the Rapu-Rapu Fact-finding Commission which recommended the total closure of the mining operation on the island.

Bishop Bastes was in Manila for the regular assembly of the Catholic Bishop's Conference of the Philippines and sent a text message to the INQUIRER saying that he was "dismayed" over the scheduled test-run of Lafayette.

Lee, meanwhile, said that a thorough test run must be conducted to "once and for all determine the viability of Lafayette's operation and to determine whether it's environmentally safe."

In a text message sent to the INQUIRER, Fr. Lino Bugaoisan, Rapu-Rapu parish priest and a staunch anti-Lafayette advocate, expressed apprehension that incidents similar to the spill last year could again occur anytime once the mining operation is allowed to resume.

Bugaoisan said Rapu-Rapu could be the next Marinduque, Diwalwal, or Guinsaugon which were all hit by environmental disasters.

The local government of Rapu-Rapu and the barangay councils around the mining area all supported the resumption of Lafayette's operation. *Bobby Labalan, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

ALL EYES President Macapagal-Arroyo holds a copy of a memorandum of understanding for sustainable forest management as Lanao del Norte Gov. Imelda Dimaporo (first from right) and other officials look on with varying facial expressions. The memorandum presentation was made part of the 47th Araw ng Lanao del Norte program that Ms Arroyo attended recently. The celebration was held at the Mindanao Civic Center Gymnasium in Tubod, the capital town of Lanao del Norte. LYN RILLON/PDI PHOTO

ROUNDUP

Theft imperils safety at NLEx

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The numerous incidents of stealing of aluminum fences along the North Luzon Expressway have taken a toll on public safety. Seven people were hurt after their jeeps struck a stray carabao that crossed the NLEx's Km 65 section here at 9:36 p.m. on Tuesday. A report from the traffic control room of the Tollways Management Corp. showed that the first vehicle, which was southbound, struck the carabao. The animal was thrown off to the highway's left lane. The second vehicle also hit the carabao. The vehicle rolled and exploded after its fuel tank leaked. The two jeeps carried 52 passengers. Seven passengers suffered bruises. Marlene Ochoa, vice president for community relations of the Manila North Tollways Corp., said at least 27 km of the expressway had been stripped of fences by thieves. Several of them have been arrested but these have not deterred the crime. The aluminum is melted and sold to junk shops. Road signs have also been stolen, Ochoa said. She said the MNTC and the TMC, the NLEx operators, have decided to replace the fences with concrete walls and patrol teams guard the areas that have no fences. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Lack of phones at GSIS

...NOT YET IN SERVICE...

LUCENA CITY—Government employees in Quezon have complained of the lack of telephones at the Government Service and Insurance System office in the outskirts of the city. "With the present high transportation fare, it's imperative for GSIS members to transact business or make simple queries as much as possible through the use of telephone. But with the GSIS here, we can't just let our fingers do the walking for us," Armand de la Cruz, a relative of a retired public schoolteacher, said. Even a member's simple clarification from any GSIS office staff member, which can be made by phone, has to be done personally—causing waste of time and money. Only one of seven GSIS telephone numbers, the one connected to the office of the local GSIS manager, is operational. When one dials the rest of the numbers, a taped message will readily answer: "The number you dialed is not yet in service," which means the number has been disconnected. Cita Abrenica, GSIS Lucena officer-in-charge, admitted that the GSIS had disconnected some of their phone lines as part of the austerity program of the government. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

3 gov't troops hurt in clash

SORSOGON CITY—Three government troops were injured in an encounter Sunday with suspected New People's Army rebels in Barangay Bacolod, Irosin. Police said PO2 Romeo Dineros, Sgt. Ricardo Opemia and Sgt. Ramon Urbiz were rushed to the Sorsogon Provincial Hospital. It was the first clash between government troops and the NPA rebels since the rebels declared a ceasefire in the areas affected by relief operations for villagers around the restive Bulusan Volcano less than two weeks ago. Reports reaching the Provincial Police Office here said that at about 7 p.m., joint elements of the Irosin Municipal Police Office and the Philippine Army detachment in Barangay Gabao rushed to Barangay Bacolod to check the reported presence of armed men. However, the government forces were met by heavy gunfire forcing them to retreat, the report added. *Bobby Labalan with report from Ephraim Aguilar, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Mine firm woos residents

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Even as opposition to its activities in the tri-boundaries of Davao del Sur, South Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat has waned, Sagittarius Mines Inc. continues to court the support of residents in its areas of operation. SMI, an Australian-Filipino company, announced that it has expanded its education program with additional 5,500 beneficiaries from Columbio, Sultan Kudarat and Tampakan, South Cotabato this year. SMI will shoulder 75 percent of the school fees while local government units will shoulder the difference. SMI over-all project coordinator Rolando Doria said they wanted the LGUs to provide a counterpart fund so that the program would not be considered a dole-out. Doria said that last year, the company spent P7.3 million for its education program. This year, he said, the amount increased to P9 million with the initiation of the company's expanded education program. "The assistance extended by SMI is a big help to the new generation in achieving their dreams," said Columbio Mayor Edwin Bermudez. *Aquiles Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Maguindanao gov withdraws militiamen from 5 towns to put stop to fighting

COTABATO CITY—MAGUINDANAO Gov. Andal Ampatuan has ordered militiamen involved in clashes with Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels to stand down and pull out, a Malacañang official said yesterday.

Jesus Dureza, national security adviser, said the order has brought back calm to Shariff Aguak and four other towns affected by the clashes that started on June 28.

More than 20,000 people were displaced because of the skirmishes, which civilian officials said killed at least seven members of the Civilian Volunteers' Organization (CVO) and three MILF rebels.

The MILF admitted it lost three guerrillas but placed the CVO casualty at more than 30.

Dureza went to Shariff Aguak on Thursday on orders of President Macapagal-Arroyo and met with Ampatuan and MILF representatives.

"A declaration of no offensive movement was agreed. It means, there will be no more movement of troops from both sides...," Dureza told the INQUIRER.

Dureza said he also met with mayors supportive of the offensive against the MILF and asked them to let the military handle the peacekeeping task.

"It's now quiet in the area," he said.

The clashes started when militiamen tried to serve warrants against two MILF leaders blamed for the June 23 roadside bomb attack that killed at least seven people in Shariff Aguak.

Police and the Ampatuans said the explosion was aimed at the Maguindanao governor, who has escaped several previous attempts on his life.

But an unidentified suspect lobbed a grenade inside a house owned by the governor here 8 a.m. yesterday.

Senior Insp. Samson Obatay, spokesperson of the city police, said the grenade failed to explode, though.

It was not clear if Ampatuan was in the house during the attack.

But Autonomous Region Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan, a son of the Maguindanao governor, said the failed grenade attack was the latest attempt to kill his father.

Dureza said aside from ordering the withdrawal of the CVOs, the Maguindanao governor also agreed to let the ceasefire committee handle the serving of the warrants against MILF commanders Sajid Pakiladato, Jamil Ombra and four other people linked to the June 23 explosion.

The US Embassy in Manila has asked for an end to hostilities.

"Any damage to home and community by fighting is tragic and it's important that the fighting be stopped as soon as possible. We support efforts by government and all concerned parties to end the hostilities," Matthew Lussenhop, US Embassy press attaché, told the INQUIRER by phone.

Lussenhop said it was important for the government and the MILF to return to the negotiating table. *Jeoffrey Maitem and Charlie Señase with a report from Eldie Aguirre, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Cabinet officer quits over Yaranon sacking

By Vincent Cabreza and Donna Demetillo
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

AFABLE

BAGUIO CITY—SECRETARY SILvestre Afable Jr. resigned as the Cabinet Officer for Regional Development (Cord) in the Cordillera on the day Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita suspended Mayor Braulio Yaranon.

Afable, the chief government negotiator in the peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, announced in a press statement on Friday that he had relinquished his Cord post because of "my disagreement with the Office of the President over the suspension of [Yaranon] in the Jadewell case."

He retains his position as chief peace negotiator, however.

Ermita suspended Yaranon for a year for abusing his authority and for grave misconduct because of a series of administrative orders that obstructed the operations of the Jadewell Pay Parking Corp.

Afable is the first Palace official to air his support for Yaranon.

Afable's mother, community paper editor Cecile Afable, had been a staunch supporter of the 78-year-old mayor.

Mrs. Afable said she is leading an indignation rally on July 17 when Ms Arroyo is scheduled to visit the city, to dramatize their support for Yaranon.

"I have supported Mayor Yaranon in his crusade against dirty politics and governance, and I shall support him in his quest for justice," Secretary Afable said in a statement.

"I praise [Yaranon] for his statesmanship in accepting the action of the Palace and in seeking lawful relief," he said.

Yaranon, a retired regional trial court judge, said he welcomed Afable's show of support. Yaranon won the mayoral post in 2004 by promising to stop the Jadewell contract, which he described as a violation of accepted road rules.

His first administrative order in office was to discourage motorists from paying street parking fees. He later ordered the police to stop Jadewell employees from collecting fees and from towing vehicles.

These two administrative orders became the basis for his suspension.

This year, Yaranon shut down Jadewell's operations based on a decision by a regional trial court. Judge Fernando Vil Pamintuan ruled that motorists have the right "to travel and be allowed to park peacefully at the roads, streets and parks of Baguio City."

Pamintuan also said Jadewell should not collect fees because "the power of taxation and police power should be exercised by the Baguio City government."

But Rogelio Tan, Jadewell president, managed to win a reprieve from the Supreme Court when it ordered the city government and the pay parking firm to maintain a status quo while it deliberated on the legality of Jadewell's contract.

Norma Tan, Jadewell operations manager, said Ermita's suspension order was based on the recommendation of the Department of Interior and Local Government, which heard Jadewell's complaint for nine months.

But she said DILG's recommendations were submitted to Ermita as early as Aug. 5, 2005.

Afable's decision to go public validated Jadewell's suspicions that Palace officials had been protecting Yaranon, she said.

City administrator Peter Fianza told the INQUIRER that Yaranon might go to court to seek an injunction should the Palace ignore his appeal.

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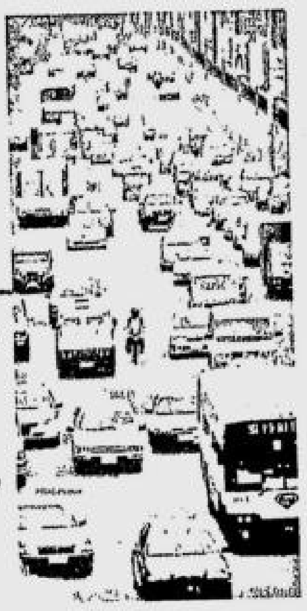

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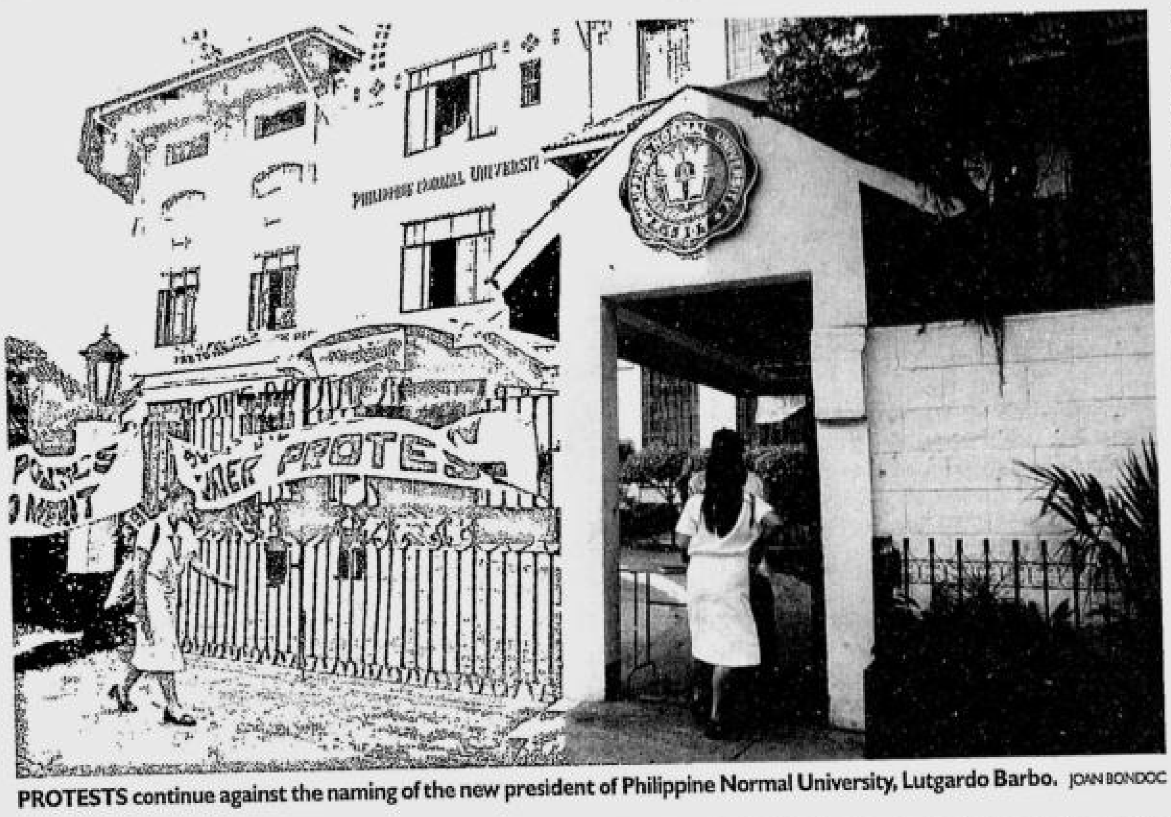
Regents vote to retain PNU president

5 more officials resign from their administrative positions



PROTESTS continue against the naming of the new president of Philippine Normal University, Lutgardo Barbo. JOAN BONDOC

By Tina G. Santos

THE BOARD OF REGENTS (BOR) OF THE Philippine Normal University yesterday reaffirmed its decision appointing lawyer Lutgardo Barbo as its new president.

The BOR's decision prompted five more officials to resign from their administrative posts, bringing the total to 30. Several students reportedly walked out of their classes after learning about the decision.

In its response to charges of faculty members and students that the procedures adopted by the search committee (SC) deviated from the generally accepted principles on statistics, the regents, led by chair Nenalyn Defensor, cited the letter of Assistant Solicitor General Renan Ramos, who said the SC was empowered to devise its own procedures.

"Atty. Barbo had already taken his oath as PNU president. His appointment is complete," Ramos said. "He, therefore, acquired a legal right which cannot be taken away either by revocation of the appointment or by removal except for cause and previous notice and hearing." Ramos added the appointing authority, in this case the BOR, had the power to choose.

The BOR maintained that the change of the phrasing of the minimum qualification clause from "must be" to "preferably" a holder of an earned doctorate degree in education or any related field was made to attract or invite more applicants for the university's highest post. The regents added the phrasing had also been adopted by almost all state colleges and universities, including the University of the Philippines (UP), in their search for president.

The BOR mentioned some "excellent" university presidents who were not doctorate degree holders, like former UP president Edgardo Angara and PNU's lawyer Lilia Garcia.

But in a text message to the INQUIRER, Garcia said she had a master's in business administration from the UP. She added that she had been with the PNU for 36 years holding middle and top management positions.

The BOR said being a lawyer was equivalent to having a master's degree. It said it also considered the new official's managerial and administrative experience in the management of scarce resources and resource generation as provincial governor of Eastern Samar for three terms.

Barbo, the BOR added, chaired the provincial school board, working closely with teachers and supervisors in developing and evaluating programs, administering delivery systems, generating funds, and administering programs for teachers and staff development.

9-year-old boy admits he was leader of rob gang

By Nancy C. Carvajal

A NINE-YEAR YEAR OLD BOY WHO ADMITted he was the mastermind in the stealing of motor vehicle spare parts worth at least P50,000 from a parked truck was arrested with seven other minors in Malabon City early yesterday morning.

Chief Insp. Teresita Soriano head of the Northern Police District Women's and Children's Desk said the boys, all of them not more than 15 years old, were accused of stealing at least P50,000 worth of accessories from a 10-wheel truck undergoing repair work parked along the street.

Leader

Soriano said the boys pointed to the youngest and smallest among them as their leader.

"The boy admitted planning the robbery," said Merceditas Caballero, a staff member of the city's social welfare department.

The stolen parts were recovered inside a videoke bar near the area where the truck was parked. Soriano said the boy had told her he sold the stolen parts so he could have his own money.

Accomplices

The boy also told the social worker that only three of the seven other minors were his accomplices.

Demonstrating how he stole the spare parts, the boy said he used his bare hands to drag the heavy spare parts and other materials he found inside the vehicle, and passed these on to his companions waiting behind the truck.

"The boy was close to tears when he was told that he would be turned over to his mother. Later, he agreed to be brought to a DSWD shelter," Soriano said.

Turnover

Under the law, all minor offenders must be turned over to the parents, but would be under the supervision of the DSWD.

The parents and the child involved must then immediately go for counseling provided also by the social welfare department.

In this case, however, Soriano said the boys would first be brought to a shelter.

Later, the DSWD will trace the parents' whereabouts to inform them about what had happened to their children.

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Fight over Alabang terminal heats up anew

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE FEUD BETWEEN THE Muntinlupa City government and a private company over the Alabang Jeepney Terminal flared up again with the arrest of five persons who attempted Wednesday a takeover of the terminal.

The police identified those arrested as Rodolfo Cabacjao, Celso Jaum, Serafin Obidos, Rolino Gonzales and Ellano Tedio, employees of the Joint Venture of Ayesel, the company managing the terminal before the local government took over in March.

. In his report, city police chief Supt. Jose Mario Espino said the group allegedly arrived at the terminal at around 10 a.m. three days ago and "by means of force and coercion" tried to take over the terminal. The group was allegedly led by Ricky Sumallo, former general manager of the terminal, and Dante Almario, former city councilor. Ariel Dolleton, current terminal manager, said he had filed physical assault and grave coercion charges against those arrested and Almario.

Also charged were Sumallo, Bobby Questas, Dave Almario, Jeanette Legaspi, Randy Soriano and several Jane and John Does.

The group claimed the takeover was covered by a temporary restraining order issued by the Court of Appeals suspending the company's eviction from the 10,293-sq.m. terminal.

Charge Danny Lim? Why not FVR, Reyes too?

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

IF THE GOVERNMENT CHARGES Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, former Army Rangers chief, with sedition for attempting to withdraw his support for President Macapagal-Arroyo last February, why weren't Fidel V. Ramos and Angelo Reyes not charged with the same offense for withdrawing their support for their commanders in chief that led to Edsa I and Edsa II, respectively? What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

The government might as well forget about charging General Lim and his supporters because it might open old, ugly wounds.

* * *

If I were President Arroyo, I would keep former President Ramos close to me to deal with future coup plotters.

. During Ramos' term there was not a single talk of a coup d'état or destabilization. Why? Because Ramos knew how to keep the military under control. I would have Ramos as a very close adviser—an elder statesman, if you will—on military affairs and communist and Muslim insurgencies, if I were GMA.

* * *

I doff my hat to former Ambassador Roy Señeres for coming out to say he supported Gen. Lim's plan to rebel against the President. It takes a lot of courage to do that.

I've known Señeres since he was our labor attaché at the United Arab Emirates in the 1980s. He didn't care whether or not the host government looked at him with disfavor for coddling runaway Filipino maids maltreated by their Arab employers.

PAULO receives medal as overall champion in the 7th Asean Age Group Chess Championships held last month in Jakarta. Left: Paolo at he games.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

8-year old chess champ makes it to Pasay's Hall of Fame

By Jocelyn R. Uy

AN EIGHT-YEAR-OLD CHESS prodigy is the youngest Pasay resident to make it to the city's Hall of Fame.

Paulo Bersamina, the overall champion in the 7th Asean Age Group Chess Championships held last month in Jakarta, Indonesia, has been included in the prestigious list, city public information officer, Manny Aun told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Bersamina, of Taylo Street, Sta. Clara, won two gold medals in the chess tournament attended by children across Asia from June 10 to 20.

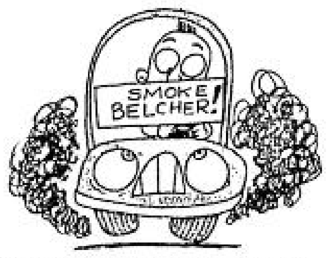
"We are very proud of Paulo. As a former Asian Games campaigner, it always warms my heart see a young Pasayeno doing well in sports.," Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad said during a ceremony held on Monday in honor of Bersamina. The young woodpusher will be joining the mayor, a former swimmer, multi-awarded Philippine Basketball Association player Elmer Reyes, Olympic swimmer Jairullah Jaitullah, Olympic sprinter Benjamin Silva-Netto and former basketball star and television personality Freddie Webb, among others, in the Hall of Fame list.

Bersamina learned to play the game at the age of 4. The multi-awarded chess awardee, a third grader, is also a scholar at the University of the East, excelling in math and computer subjects.

METROBRIEFS

Deadly lovers' spat

A LOVERS' quarrel led to the death of a 28-year-old laborer, who was stabbed allegedly by his partner inside their house in Quezon City the other night. Police are hunting down Apple Grace Jacinto, 21, the primary suspect in the killing of Reynaldo Evangelista at 13 Artillery Road, Barangay Holy Spirit. Evangelista and Jacinto were overheard having a heated quarrel just before 10 p.m., according to a report by PO3 Allan Rodulfo of the Quezon City Police District criminal investigation division. At the height of the argument, Jacinto allegedly got hold of a knife and stabbed Evangelista. Neighbors rushed the victim to the Malvar General Hospital, but Evangelista, who sustained a stab wound in the right chest, died later, police said. Jacinto remains at large. *DJ Yap*


SMOKE BELCHER!

Watch that smoke!

THE MAKATI CITY government is showing no let up in its campaign against smoke belchers. Nearly 4,000 motorists were apprehended for violating antismoke belching laws in the first six months this year, reported the Makati Pollution and Control Office (MPCO) yesterday. The main culprits were delivery vans, accounting for 1,694 apprehensions followed by trucks with 1,373; private cars, 320; jeepneys, 301; buses, 138 and taxis, 51. MCPO Chief Reggie Suarez said all apprehended vehicles would undergo a smoke meter test to determine the level of smoke emission based on standards set by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. *Jocelyn R. Uy*

American tourist detained for alleged rape

POLICE ARRESTED AN AMERICAN TOURIST ON ALLEGATION he and two men gang raped a 17-year-old girl for five days, officials said Friday.

Kenneth O. Saunders Jr., 25, a native of Washington in the United States, was arrested in his temporary residence in Pasig City on Thursday after the girl filed a complaint alleging she was detained and gang raped over five days this week inside his house, police officer Samuel Peralta said. "He told us the rape charge was fabricated because the girl's parents wanted him to marry their daughter," Superintendent Gilbert Cruz told reporters.

Peralta said the teenager alleged she was detained and raped from Sunday to Thursday, after she was invited by two men to Saunders' house. The girl said she was able to escape and report to police, according to Cruz. Saunders was detained at the police station. His two companions were at large. *AP*

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The WORLD

Editor
Luverne B. Gueco

24 killed in Israel assault

GAZA CITY—TWENTY-THREE PALESTINIANS and an Israeli soldier have been killed in the past 24 hours as Israel widened its assault in Gaza, reoccupying land evacuated 10 months ago and carrying out a wave of deadly air raids.

After the bloodiest day since Israel launched its offensive, the UN Security Council debated a draft resolution demanding an immediate withdrawal of its forces from the Gaza Strip and the release of detained Palestinian officials.

But the United States, Israel's closest ally, described it as "unbalanced."

Early Friday, Israeli forces launched a new air raid on the town of Beit Lahiya, the main battleground in northern Gaza, killing an armed Palestinian militant and wounding three others, Palestinian security officials said.

In a major escalation of the conflict on Thursday, Israel sent its troops deep into the northern Gaza Strip, effectively creating a buffer zone in the territory it withdrew from in September last year.

Israel has vowed to use everything in its power to increase the pressure on the embattled Hamas-led government to free a soldier captured by Palestinian militants in an attack 12 days ago and to stop rocket attacks.

Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniya slammed the Gaza assault as "collective punishment" and demanded international intervention to stop Israel's biggest military operation since it pulled out of Gaza.

"It's a crime against humanity," said Haniya, who himself has been directly targeted by the Israeli offensive.

The Hamas government, which is boycotted both financially and politically by Israel and the West, put its security forces on high alert and urged all Palestinians to take up arms against the Israeli military.

One Israeli soldier was shot dead in fighting in Beit Lahiya, a killing claimed by one of the militant groups behind the June 25 abduction of 19-year-old Cpl. Gilad Shalit.

In the worst single incident, 11 Palestinians were killed, including two fighters loyal to Hamas, in an Israeli bombardment on Beit Lahiya, one of a series of deadly attacks throughout the day, medics said.

Bloodstained bodies could be seen huddled together as the wounded frantically carried other victims caked in blood through the streets.

In the West Bank, Israeli forces launched an incursion into a refugee camp in the northern city of Jenin, killing a 16-year-old Palestinian and wounding several more people, including militants, medics said.

Experts from the 15-member Security Council met behind closed doors to discuss a draft, presented by Qatar on behalf of the UN's Arab Group, which calls on Israel, as the occupying power, to abide by its obligations under the Geneva Convention on the protection of civilians in time of war. *AFP*

A MAN carries the lifeless body of a Palestinian boy after an Israeli strike in the northern Gaza Strip town of Beit Lahiya July 6. AP

IMAGE from Nasa TV shows astronaut Mike Fossum leading the way as the crew floats into the International Space Station July 6. AP

Nasa confident Discovery trouble is over

HOUSTON—NASA ENGINEERS worked overnight on Friday to assess images of space shuttle Discovery's heat shield after two days of intensive inspections and growing optimism the problems leading to the fatal 2003 Columbia accident are over.

The shuttle reached the International Space Station on Thursday to bring the resident crew up to its full, three-member staff for the first time since the accident and to deliver more than 5,000 pounds (2,268 kg) of new equipment and supplies.

"Overall, we have a really clean vehicle," deputy space shuttle program manager John Shannon said during a briefing on Thursday evening. "We're really happy."

Preliminary results of the inflight inspections, which were conducted by the shuttle astronauts using a sensor-studded boom and by the station crew, which photographed Discovery's heat-resistant belly tiles before docking, showed no damage from debris impacts during the shuttle's ride to orbit on Tuesday.

On the last shuttle flight a year ago, the fuel tank used on Discovery shed large pieces of insulating foam, although none struck the spacecraft.

The flight before that ended with the breakup of shuttle Columbia and the deaths of seven astronauts on Feb. 1, 2003.

Columbia was hit by debris falling from the tank during launch and broke apart as it attempted to fly through the atmosphere for landing.

Nasa has said any more serious problems with the shuttle likely would spell the end of the program and seriously affect plans for the half-built $100 billion space station. The remaining modules, structural trusses and solar power arrays can only be carried and installed by the shuttles and must be done before the fleet is retired in 2010. *Reuters*

Conservative wins tight Mexico race

MEXICO CITY—FELIPE CALDERON won the official count in Mexico's disputed presidential race Thursday, the culmination of a come-from-behind campaign for the stiff technocrat from the country's ruling party. But his leftist rival also declared victory and said he'd fight the election in court.

Calderon was already reaching out to other parties to build a "unity government," while his rival, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, blamed fraud for his narrow loss in the vote count and called on his supporters to fill Mexico City's main square Saturday in a show of force.

With the 41 million votes counted, Calderon of President Vicente Fox's National Action Party had 35.89 percent, or 15 million votes, to 35.31 percent, or 14.8 million votes, for Lopez Obrador of the Democratic Revolution Party, said Luis Carlos Ugalde, president of the Federal Electoral Institute, or IFE.

Roberto Madrazo, whose Institutional Revolutionary Party controlled Mexico for 71 years until Fox's victory in 2000, had 22.26 percent, and two minor candidates split the rest.

Ugalde confirmed Calderon as the winner at a news conference several hours after the final vote recount was made public. The IFE will not declare him president-elect, however; that is the responsibility of the Federal Electoral Tribunal. The tribunal has until Aug. 31 to resolve any challenges regarding the recount, and Sept. 6 to officially declare who is president-elect.

The next president begins a single, six-year term on Dec. 1.

Mexican stocks closed 2.7 percent higher and the peso rebounded Thursday on news of Calderon's lead in the vote count. The markets closed before the count was finished.

But many obstacles remain in Calderon's path. If his triumph is upheld by electoral courts, he will face a Congress dominated by opposition parties, as well as a divided nation that sends millions north to work in the United States illegally.

"The time has arrived for unity and agreements," a smiling, but somewhat restrained Calderon told dozens of exuberant supporters who gathered at his campaign headquarters Thursday evening and began shouting, "You did it! You did it!" to celebrate his apparent victory.

"I'm making it my personal duty to take on as my own the wishes and desires of the millions of citizens who voted for other candidates," he said.

Calderon also called on all parties to put aside politics as usual "and work together as a team."

To scattered boos, he reached out to Lopez Obrador, saying, "I not only reiterate my respect but also share his desire for justice, and I reiterate my commitment to work tirelessly ... for great equality and opportunity that will allow millions of Mexicans to overcome poverty."

US President George W. Bush's decision to send National Guard troops to the border has increased tensions in Mexico, as has a US congressional proposal to extend walls along the two countries' frontier.

Calderon wants to rely on Mexico's many free-trade accords to create jobs. He has vowed to crack down on rising crime and says he'll try to smooth US relations without letting Washington dominate. *AP*

US general, envoy apologize for Iraq rape-murders horror

BAGHDAD, IRAQ—THE US AMbassador and the top American military commander here together issued an unusual apology on Thursday for the rape and murder of a young Iraqi woman and the killing of her family, saying that the crime, in which at least four soldiers are suspects, had injured the "Iraqi people as a whole."

The statement came just hours after Prime Minister Nouri Kamal al-Maliki said at a news conference that he might ask the American military to scrap a rule that grants foreign soldiers here immunity from Iraqi prosecution.

"Our people cannot tolerate that every day there is an ugly crime such as that in Mahmoudiya," he said, referring to the market town near which the four Iraqis, including a young girl, were killed on March 12.

The incident first became public last week, when the 4th Infantry Division announced it was investigating the involvement of American soldiers in the rape and slayings.

The strongly worded apology issued Thursday night by the top American commander in Iraq, Gen. George W. Casey Jr., and Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad revealed the deep concern among American officials over the criminal episode's potential to damage the entire American project in Iraq. *NYT*

China, Russia buck N. Korea sanctions

UNITED NATIONS—CHINA AND Russia dug in their heels over imposing UN sanctions on North Korea over its missile tests Thursday, as President George W. Bush appealed to fellow leaders for united action.

The United States and Japan led efforts to condemn and punish Pyongyang in the UN Security Council—hours after unrepentant North Korea vowed to fire off more tests, despite global outrage over Wednesday's seven launches.

Experts from the 15-member Security Council met for two hours, but could not break a deadlock over a Japanese draft resolution promising financial sanctions against North Korea.

Veto-wielding China and Russia, seen as two of the few sources of influence over the reclusive state, remained set on a resolution rebuking North Korea, but stripped of punitive measures, diplomats said.

"Our position remains unchanged," Chinese UN delegate Li Junhua told AFP after the two-hour meeting. "We need some flexible signals from our Japanese colleagues."

US Ambassador John Bolton insisted that the council would eventually pass a binding resolution condemning the missile launches. *AFP*

VALENCIA AWAITS POPE VISIT
Photo of Pope Benedict XVI is displayed with dolls in "falleras" Valencian dress in Valencia, Spain, July 6, where the Pope will say Mass in the 5th World Meeting of Families next Sunday. AP

US court voids $145-B award for smokers

TOBACCO COMPANIES IN THE United States won a major legal victory Thursday when the Florida Supreme Court upheld a decision to toss out a $145-billion judgment against them.

The ruling, one of the last remaining personal injury class-action cases against tobacco companies, is a crushing blow to plaintiff's lawyers, who have pushed for large class-action cases with the potential for multibillion-dollar verdicts. The six-judge Florida court stated that smokers' cases "are highly individualized" and "do not lend themselves to class-action treatment."

Investors applauded the decision, which drastically reduces the possibility of massive, bank-breaking awards in tobacco cases. Shares of the two largest companies named in the suit, Altria, the parent of Phillip Morris, and Reynolds American, which owns R.J. Reynolds, were up sharply. Altria closed up $4.43, or 6 percent, at $77.76 and Reynolds American closed up $4.59, or 4 percent, at $118.95. *NYT*

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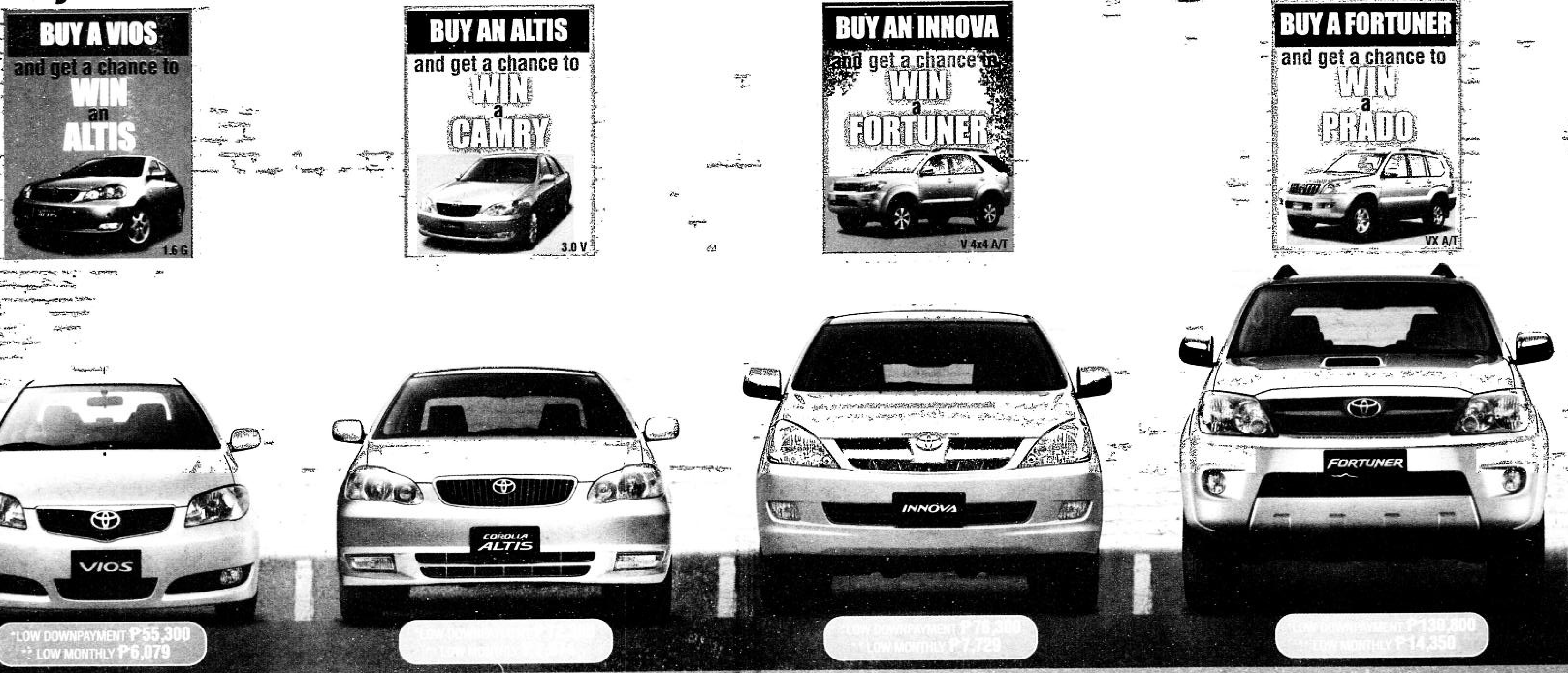

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WHAT'S INSIDE

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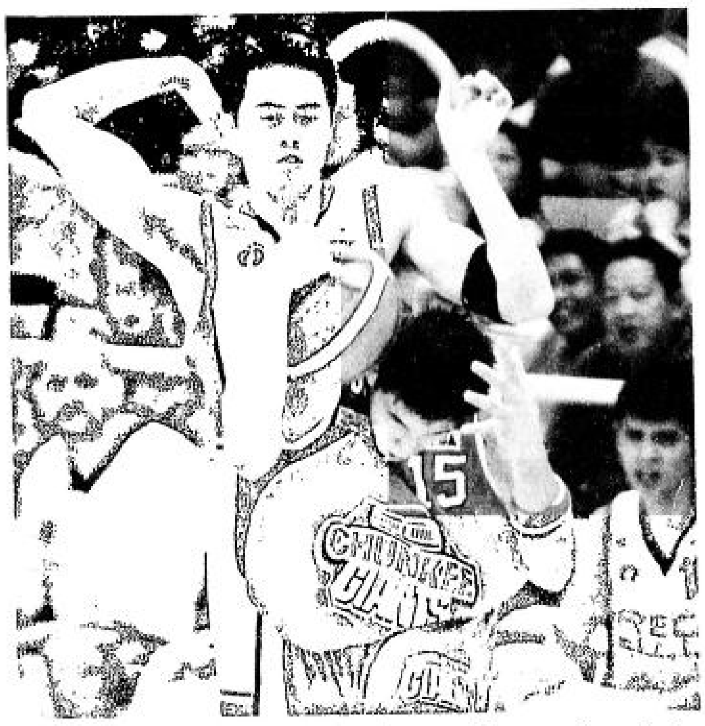
It's Amelie versus Justine /A26



MARC Pingris (front) of Purefoods tries to regain possession against Red Bull's Larry Fonacier in their game yesterday. ERIK ARAZAS

Giants grab 2-0 lead as Pingris, Yee shine

GAME TOMORROW (*Araneta Coliseum*)
6:10 p.m.—Red Bull vs Purefoods (*Game 3 of Finals*)

By June Navarro

RED BULL CAME IN PREPARED for James Yap and Kerby Raymundo. Marc Pingris and Richard Yee, though, caught the Bulls flat-footed.

Overlooked, Pingris and Yee transformed into a formidable scoring tandem and carried Purefoods to a resounding 93-82 win over Red Bull for a commanding 2-0 lead in the PBA Philippine Cup Finals last night at the Cuneta Astrodome.

Yee put up another sterling performance by banging all of his 17 points in the second half while Pingris pumped in a career-high 21 points, most of them in the shaded area to help the Giants pull away.

"Richard (Yee) saved us in Game 1. Tonight, he made a lot of key baskets underneath that proved to be decisive," said Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio, who moved two games closer to his first All-Filipino crown.

In franchise history, Purefoods has always won a best-of-seven series when it has a 2-0 lead, which happened thrice in the past.

"We don't want to dwell in the past," said Gregorio. "Again, it's a nice win but it takes four victories to win the championship."

Raymundo was limited to 12 points, a far cry from his 30-point explosion in Game 1. But when winning time came, the MVP contender joined forces with Yap to fend off Red Bull's ferocious chase in the end.

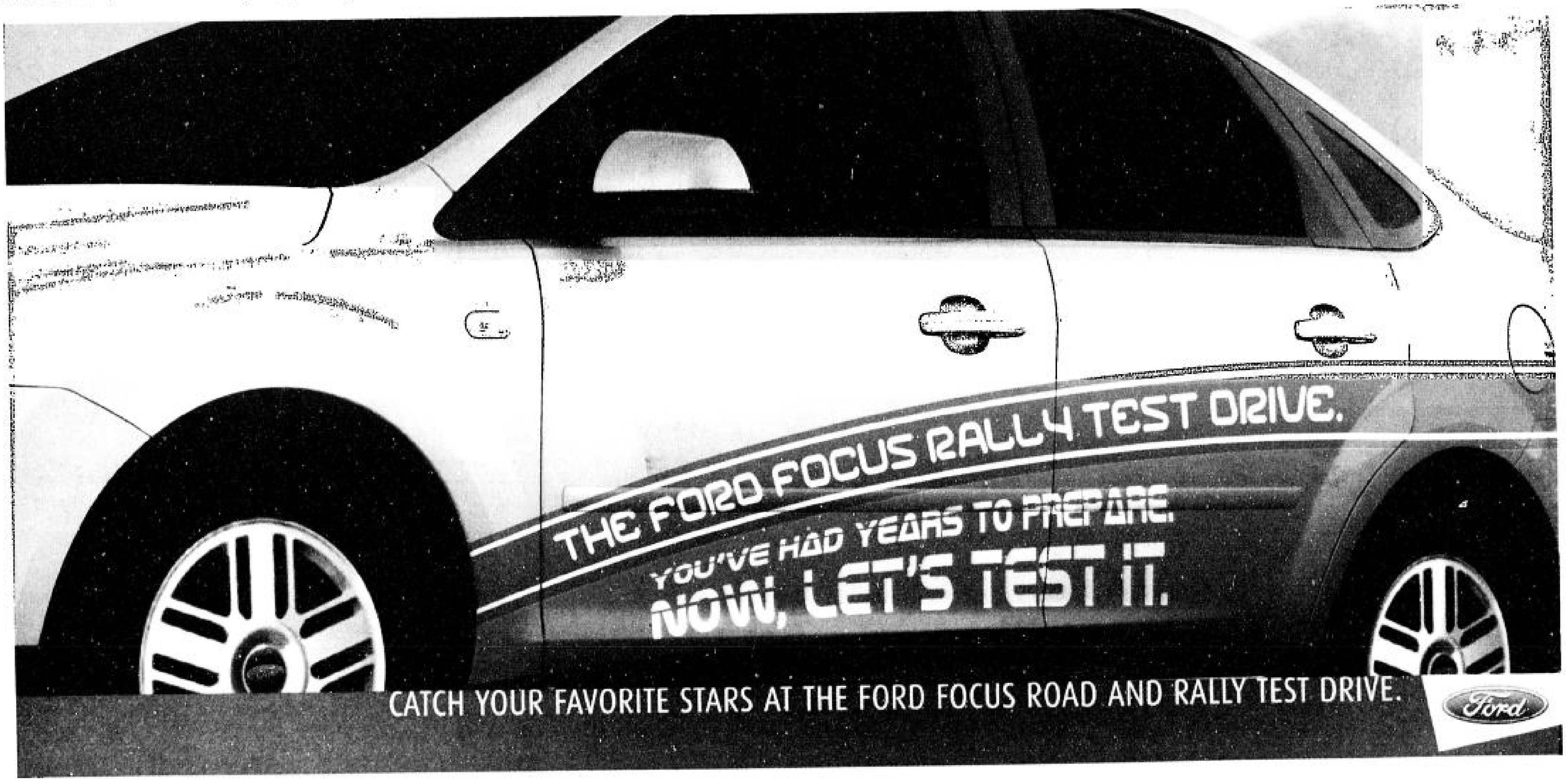
"It's nice to see Kerby, James and Marc play good music together," said Gregorio.

The scores:

PUREFOODS 93—Yap J. 23, Pingris 21, Yee 17, Raymundo 12, Castillo 12, Limpot 8, Artadi 0, Simon 0, Gamboa 0, Yap R. 0, Evangelista 0.

RED BULL 82—Tugade 18, Villanueva 13, Baguio 11, Najorda 8, Pennisi 7, Fonacier 6, Bugia 6, Robinson 6, Cruz 5, Hrabak 2, Valenzuela 0.

Quarters: 24-13, 39-48, 67-62, 93-82.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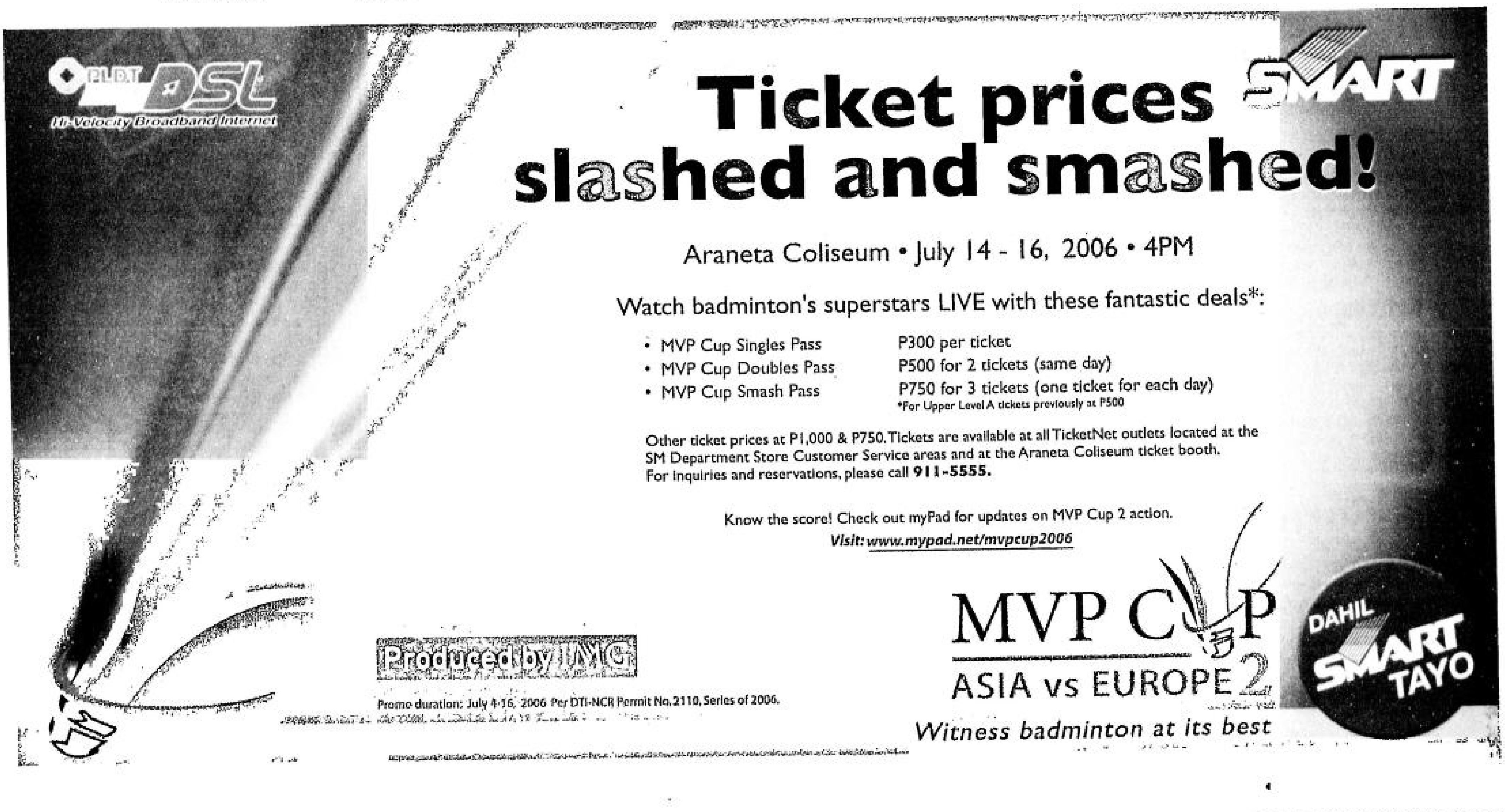

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UAAP INAUGURAL

Favored Warriors open bid vs Falcons

By Jasmine W. Payo

GAMES TODAY (*Araneta Coliseum*)
1 p.m.—Opening Ceremonies
2 p.m.—Univ. of the East vs Adamson
4 p.m.—National Univ. vs Ateneo

IN 2004, UNIVERSITY OF THE EAST mentor Dindo Pumaren said his young charges were still a couple of years away from being a title contender.

Such a bold prediction from a rookie coach, but Pumaren knew exactly what he was talking about.

True enough, the Warriors set out as favorites when the 69th UAAP basketball season fires off today at the Araneta Coliseum.

"From the start, our coaching staff thought that it would take three years for the team to be really competitive," said Pumaren. "We're happy that our program is on track."

Favored for their solid lineup, the UE Warriors will kick off their campaign versus the Adamson Falcons at 2 p.m.

"We all know that this is UE's season, they're the barometer of the tournament," said new Adamson coach Leo Austria. "But I still think that an upset is possible. Most of our players have also matured."

The Ateneo Blue Eagles, still among the top picks after finishing third last season, will open their bid against the National University Bulldogs at 4 p.m.

"All the teams have been affected by graduating players," said Ateneo coach Norman Black, who lost star point guard LA Tenorio. "But whenever players graduate, you expect others to step up and take over. I think we have enough in our backcourt to be successful this year."

Opening ceremonies start at 1 p.m., with host UE parading its former cage heroes led by Robert Jaworski, Allan Caidic, Jerry Codiñera and James Yap, along with past coaches Baby Dalupan, Pilo Pumaren, Roehl Nadurata and Jimmy Mariano.

UE's star-studded supporters may seem like added pressure, but Pumaren remains confident with Bonbon Custodio, Mark Borboran and Marcy Arellano at the forefront of the Warriors' bid.

"The players have learned to deal with high expectations," said Pumaren. "We had a good practice (yesterday) so hopefully, the team will sustain its aggressiveness and confidence. But Adamson is still solid, they have 10 returning players."

Even with Tenorio gone, Black said Ateneo's backcourt remains competitive with Macky Escalona, Chris Tiu and Jai Reyes. The Eagles, though, will depend on the leadership of fifth-year forward JC Intal.

The Falcons, who finished seventh with a dismal 3-11 record last season, will be turning to veteran center Ken Bono and shooter Patrick Cabahug.

"It's a challenge for us to face UE in our first game, but I've also seen the hungriness of our players," said Austria.

Although coming off another disheartening season, the Bulldogs will still rely on forward Edwin Asoro, last year's leading scorer with 15.3 points and fourth-best rebounder at 8.7 boards per game.

Only seven teams will compete this season as La Salle serves its one-year suspension for fielding two ineligible basketball players in the last three years.

Lions mangle Cards; Stags gore Blazers

By Marc Anthony Reyes

STANDINGS	W	L
Letran	3	0
PCU	3	1
San Beda	3	1
S. Sebastian	2	3
Perpetual	1	2
Mapua	1	2
St. Benilde	1	3
Jose Rizal	0	2

GAMES MONDAY
(*Ninoy Aquino Stadium*)
12 nn—Jose Rizal U vs PCU (Jrs/Srs)
4 p.m.—Perpetual vs Mapua (Srs)

VETERAN POINT GUARD ALEX ANGELES found room to shine in the talent-thick lineup of San Beda, scoring all his points from beyond the arc to power the Red Lions to a 69-55 rout of the Mapua Cardinals yesterday in the NCAA men's basketball tournament at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

Angeles finished with 15 points, making five of seven attempts from beyond the arc to lead the Lions to their third win in four outings. His heroics eased the load on top guns Rogie Menor and Nigerian rookie Samuel Ekwe.

"We forced them to play man to man," said SBC coach Koy Banal. "But that is because we were hitting our shots."

Ekwe finished with 11 points, 13 rebounds, six blocks and one steal to provide the backbone for the San Beda win. His slam dunk with 7:05 to go gave the Red Lions their biggest lead, 60-44.

The Cardinals clawed back with eight unanswered points to make a last stand, but Menor drilled two free throws and Angeles drained the last of his triples for a 65-52, three minutes left.

Menor had nine points, 13 rebounds, four assists and one steal, while rookie guard Pong Escobal added nine points for the Red Lions, on top of four assists.

Jim Viray did just about everything to power San Sebastian to an 89-85 overtime victory over St. Benilde in the other seniors game.

The 6-foot-4 Viray had 23 points, eight rebounds and two blocks to seal the Stags' second win in five games and help snap his team's two-game slide.

In the first game, the Staglets tripped the CSB-LSGH Greenies, 78-70, to post their fourth victory in as many games. The Greenies are now 2-2.

The senior scores:

SECOND GAME (srs)

SSC 89—Viray 23, Vicente 21, Aquino 17, Bulawan 8, Lindaya 4, Raymundo 4, Najorda 4, Juan 3, Delgado 3, Sagad 2, Quiamco 0, De Leon 0, Ballesteros 0, Tioseco 0.

CSB 85—Urra Jr. 21, Layug 18, Johnston 16, Sevilla 12, Robles 7, Aldover 5, Manding 4, Cadiz 2, Urra III 0, Manlapaz 0, Trillo 0, Devaras 0, David 0, Umlas 0, Libunao 0.

Quarters: 10-14, 28-35, 50-58, 76-76, 89-85 OT

THIRD GAME (srs)

SBC 69—Angeles 15, Ekwe 11, Escobal 9, Menor 9, Maggay 8, Gamalinda 8, Aljamal 5, Tecson 4, Hermida 0, Taganas 0.

MAPUA 55—Dela Peña 15, Co 11, Del Rosario 10, Gonzales 8, Pascual 6, Mazo 3, Tiongco 2, Sumalinog 0, Pascual 0.

Quarters: 20-17, 33-30, 56-40, 69-55

ST. BENILDE'S Angelo Aldover makes a reverse shot against San Sebastian's Jason Ballesteros during their game yesterday. ERIK ARAZAS

SPORTSWATCH

Tañamor heads pugs in Pakistan tilt

FRESH OFF ITS TRIUMPHANT STINT IN THE HANOI INTERNATIONAL BOXING tournament, the Philippines sees action in the 4th Greenhill Cup International slugfest from July 8-14 in Karachi, Pakistan. Light flyweight and Athens Olympian Harry Tañamor banners the country's campaign in the event featuring top Asian and European amateurs. Also competing are Olympian Violito Payla (flyweight), Asian Championships Best Boxer Joan Tipon (bantamweight), Orlando Tacuyan Jr. (featherweight), Genebert Basadre (lightweight) and Delfin Bohol (light-welter). Head coach is Patricio Gaspi.

RP judokas vying for Doha Asiad berths

EIGHT OF THE COUNTRY'S TOP JUDOKAS SHOOT FOR BERTHS IN THE 15th Doha Asian Games in December as they go up against some of the region's best in the 2006 Thailand International Judo Championships starting today in Chanthaburi. Led by seven-time Southeast Asian Games gold medalist John Baylon, the RP team is expected to have its hands full since the other competing countries are also sending their top players. The rest of the RP team members are Gilbert Ramirez, Franco Teves, Sydney Schwarzkopf, Elmarie Malasan, Estie Gay Liwanen, Lou-Ann Jindani and Erika Joy Ponciano.

Roligon 6-cocker semis gets going

THE SEMIFINAL ROUND OF THE "HATAWAN SA TAG-ULAN" 6-COCK DERby gets under way at the 15,000-seat Roligon Mega Cockpit today with 84 fights on tap. Seeing action today in the derby sponsored by Lakpue Drug Inc. and Thunderbird Enertone are participants who scored 1.0 or 1.5 points in the elimination rounds. Those with two points will dispute the championship on Tuesday. Participants who will score four points today will share in the P600,000 special prize, said host Rolly Ligon. The winning handler and gaffer gets P30,000 and P20,000, respectively.

New fight format starts today at SJC

A NEW COCKFIGHT FORMAT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED STARTING TODAY at the San Juan Coliseum with more than 100 smalltime cockers and breeders seeing action. No entry fee is required in the fights which start at 10 a.m. SJC pit managers Pete Rivera and Ronnie Lacsina said the first 10 winners will receive P1,000 each; 11th to 20th winners P700 and 21st to 30th winners P500. "This new format will be held every Saturday," Rivera said. Meanwhile, at least 150 participants have registered for the "Rambulan Sa San Juan" 5-cock derby slated July 17, 19, 21, 24, 26, and 29.

Spring-Parañaque, Ozamiz cagers take semis openers

TAGAYTAY CITY—FAVORED SPRING COOKING Oil-Parañaque and Ozamiz Cotta lived up to expectation by beating their respective rivals Thursday at the start of the best-of-three crossover semifinals in the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championship here.

PBL veteran Marvin Ortiguerra struck hard late in the payoff quarter to propel the Cooking Oil Masters of NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and Vice Mayor Anjo Yllana past Mayor Sammy Co's expansion team Pagadian, 82-75.

Mayor Reynaldo Parojinog's Ozamiz cagers crushed Mayor Bambol Tolentino's Batang Tagaytay squad, 94-84, in the other match.

Games 2—and 3, if necessary—will be played in Ozamiz and Pagadian on July 11-12 and July 14-15, respectively.

The Cooking Oil Masters and the Cotta Shrine cagers need to win anew to arrange a title showdown in the tournament sponsored by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Spring Cooking Oil, Regent Foods, Firefly Lightings, Molten and Prime Channel.

With the score tied at 75 in the last 1:43, Ortiguerra scored back-to-back baskets to give Spring-Parañaque the advantage for good.

The scores:

OZAMIZ 94—Basco 17, Ilanga 16, Alberto 12, Guerrero 11, Cavan 10, Sampilo 10, Bansil 10, Llangco 4, Lina 2, Yabut 0.

TAGAYTAY 84—Marquez 20, Robillos 20, Mallari 10, Finullar 9, Genido 6, Guiyab 6, Reyes 6, Caceres 3, Sta. Maria 2, Mendoza 2.

Quarters: 16-21, 50-42, 73-63, 94-84

SPRING-PARAÑAQUE 82—Manuel 17, Rodriguez 15, Ortiguerra 11, Epondulan 8, Yambao 7, Morante 7, Capobres 6, Yee 4, Reyes 2, De Castro 2, Inigo 2, Bamson 1.

PAGADIAN 75—Marata 20, Naron 19, Daja 12, Cortez 11, Salud 5, Quilo 3, Ayuk 2, Pamaran 2, Omandam 1, Orquillas 0.

Quarters: 17-19, 41-42, 56-58, 82-75

Football Fiesta kicks off at Ateneo

IT'S THE FIRST FOOTBALL FESTIVAL OF THE school year and the kids are expected on the pitch in full force to play.

The PFF-Red Ribbon Football Fiesta gets going today at the Ateneo de Manila University football grounds in Katipunan with over 150 teams and 1,500 footballers expected to show up.

They have been divided into numerous age categories for boys and girls starting today and the open division beginning tomorrow.

Red Ribbon Football was conceptualized by PFF president Johnny Romualdez and Red Ribbon's former president, Danny Moran, a former national player in the '80s.

The concept blends the seven-a-side format with an assortment of promotional ideas like game booths, parlour games, a festive look, pop music, face-painting and even art events.

Sales-Cortez nails Nicklaus stint

GARY SALES AND FELIX DENNIS CORTEZ combined for a net 60 and then won in a countback to clinch a berth in the Jack Nicklaus International Invitational tournament at the Bear's Club in Jupiter, Florida, in November.

The Sales-Cortez pair actually tied with the tandems of Wilfred Batara and Manfred Guangko and that of Alex Ignacio and Raul Gonzales at 12 under par, but Sales-Cortez topped the scramble format with a natural eagle.

More than 200 amateur golfers took part in the local qualifying tournament at the tough but picturesque Sta. Elena course in Laguna last Monday.

The event was presented by Sta. Elena Golf and Country Club in cooperation with Volvo For Life and sponsored by Gulf Air, El Nido Resort and Island Transvoyager. Minor sponsors were Mezze, Fury Active Eyewear, Dunhill Fragrances and Hawaiian Tropic.

BEST THREE: Champions Cortez and Sales (third and fourth from left) are flanked by Ignacio-Gonzales (left) and runners-up Batara-Guangko.

PBA MVP race too close to call

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

EXCITEMENT IS IN the air. Not only because of the ongoing Philippine Cup best-of-seven championship series between Purefoods and Red Bull, but more so because of the tightly contested MVP race among James Yap, Kerby Raymundo, Enrico Villanueva, Lordy Tugade and Marc Pingris, in that order, according to statistical points.

As I write this, the PBA Press Corps, headed by Malaya's Noli Cortez, was set to convene at the Araneta Coliseum at 5 p.m. to deliberate on its collegial vote, which will comprise 30 percent of the total 25 percent vote from media.

Insiders who have kept track of the PBA MVP awards will be awaiting the result of the deliberation because, for the past few years, the choice of the Press Corps had always emerged the MVP winner.

* * *

Since none of the five candidates this season is a hands-down choice, the deliberation is expected to take longer than usual.

"This year we will use the candidates' raw stats as our basis in assessing their performance," Noli said. "By doing away with the bonus points for won games, for qualifying into the quarterfinals, the semifinals and the finals, we get a clearer picture of the player's true value."

The group will also evaluate the candidates for the other awards like the ROY (Rookie of the Year), the BPC (Best Player of the Conference), the Mythical, All-Defensive teams, the Most Improved Player, SportsManship, etc.

* * *

Noli pointed out that those who played up to the championship round of the First Conference will have an edge over the candidates in the Second Conference because their statistics were counted up to the last playing day of the final round.

In the ongoing Philippine Cup, the stats credited were only up to the last game of the semifinals, which is the cut-off period.

Raymundo, Villanueva, Yap, Tugade and RenRen Ritualo were the top five in statistical points, in that order, last conference where Villanueva emerged Best Player of the Conference.

"The deliberation will start with nominations. The nominators are expected to be able to defend their choice. Then we evaluate, based on the arguments put forward, the raw data provided us, and the intangibles."

Noli said consistency, value to the team and value to the league as a whole will have a premium.

The PBAPC president is keeping his fingers crossed that the group will arrive at a consensus without going to a vote, which he thinks is divisive.

"I want to avoid a repeat of what happened in the Fiesta Conference's BPC selection," said Noli, who is taking every step to ensure a transparent, suspicion-free and peaceful selection process for the PBAPC.

* * *

The praying never stops for couple James Yap and Kris Aquino.

As Kris disclosed, at the time Purefoods lost Game 4 and was on the verge of elimination at 1-3 in the Philippine Cup semifinals, she and James went down on their knees to implore the Almighty for the series to go down the wire.

"We prayed that the Lord may just let them reach Game 7 and on Game 7, may it all be God's will. We were ready to accept whatever His will might be," said Kris.

Unexpectedly, Purefoods pulled a minor miracle and the Giants, who had been written off by most, overcame the odds and made it to the finals.

After the Giants' victory in Game 1 of the Finals, Kris said she and James went to Baclaran, to thank the Lord for leading the team to where it was.

"We prayed our thanks, for God again exceeded our prayers," Kris said. "I told James that to emerge with the best stats in only in his second year is such a blessing and a reward for his discipline and hard work. It has been a great year for him.

"An award would be his ultimate joy, but just as we prayed before, we leave everything in God's hands."

Xavier Futsal booters seek fourth win against Pagcor

FUTSAL ACTION HEATS UP ANEW AS THE ATENEO booters clash with AFP Selection at 2 p.m. in one of the featured matches of the 2006 Adidas Futsal Championship at the Blue Eagle Gym in Ateneo de Manila. Both toting 2-0-1 (win-draw-loss) cards in the men's Second Division-A, Ateneo and AFP Selection collide in a bid to wrest solo second spot behind frontrunning Xavier Alumni FC (3-0-1), which plays Pagcor (1-0-2) in the 4 p.m. match. University of Asia & the Pacific (2-0-0) tackles Marines-A (1-0-2) in the 3 p.m. encounter. Army, meanwhile, will seek its fourth straight win against Navy at 5 p.m. A win will shove Army into a tie for the lead with Air Force (4-0-0) in the event sponsored by Adidas, in cooperation with the National Capital Region Football Association.

Little Debbie makes grade for US Amateur

DE VILLA: Seventh placer in a field of 80.

By Jong Arcano

LOS ANGELES—DEBBIE DE VILLA HAS put a Filipino name on the roster of this year's United States Women's Amateur Championship.

The diminutive 15-year-old survived the demanding conditions of the Friendly Hills Country Club in Whittier, California, with a four-over-par 75 Thursday (Friday in Manila) to join nine other players who secured slots for next month's tournament proper.

The 106th edition of the US Women's Amateur, one of the 18 high-profile events handled by the USGA, tees off on Aug. 7 at the Pumpkin Ridge Golf Club in Oregon.

Wrestling with a balky putter all day, De Villa tied for seventh place in the 80-strong field that vied for berths in the 18-hole qualifier ruled by Korean lass Hur.

She humbled the course with a 69.

Lee Seo-jae, another Korean who lost to De Villa in the RP Ladies Open early this year at Manila Golf, shot a 71 for second place.

But none of De Villa's six teammates in the ICTSI training pool sent here by business tycoon patron Ricky Razon for a series of stints under the supervision of noted swing guru Bong Lopez made it.

Cyna Rodriguez and Anya Tanpinco carded 78s, Lora Roberto tallied a 79, Mia Piccio made an 84, Bambi dela Paz checked in with an 85 and Crystal Superal wound up with an 88 at the up-and-down course in the San Gabriel mountains.

"Deb really handled the course very well despite some putting miscues, said Lopez. "Contrary to the name of the course, the conditions were not friendly at all, but Deb came prepared and got the job done."

Back-to-back birdies on the third and fourth holes gave De Villa the needed cushion for the putting miscues that came along the way. She three-putted the seventh, 14th and 18th en route to nines of 36-39.

Jungolfer Miko Yee carried the bag for De Villa and their partnership proved perfect.

Pacman backs Suico's WBA title challenge

WHEN IT COMES TO LENDING support to his fellow fighters, pound-for-pound icon Manny Pacquiao is tops.

The Filipino superstar leaves for the United States on July 12 to lead the cheering team for Filipino Randy Suico, who will challenge undefeated Juan Diaz for the World Boxing Association lightweight title.

The dynamite-fisted Suico (24-2, 21 KOs) he battles Diaz (29-0, 14 KOs) in a 12-round showdown at the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas.The fight, which will be aired live by Solar Sports on July 16, is the chief support to the Shane Mosley-Fernando Vargas rematch.

The Mandaue City government yesterday announced that a cash incentive awaits Suico should he take the title. *Salven L. Lagumbay*

Piencenaves, Flores rally to seal final showdown

IAN PIENCENAVES AND CHRISTOPHER Flores rallied to beat their respective rivals and arrange a showdown for the men's singles crown while Irene Chiu and Alma Ledesma handily won their semifinal matches in the ladies side of the P1 million JVC Open Badminton Championships at Glorietta yesterday.

Piencenaves, the 2003 champion from Butuan Badminton Club, completed a stirring 22-24, 21-13, 21-16 victory over top-seeded Lloyd Escoses while Flores, an FEU mainstay, also battled back from a set down to beat Melvin Llanes, 18-21, 26-24, 21-14, in the centerpiece elite masters division of the event sponsored by JVC (Phils), Inc.

The top-seeded Chiu, playing out of RTC Badminton, prevailed over Karyn Velez of Golden Shuttle Foundation in straight sets, 21-17, 21-15, while the second-ranked Ledesma, also of GSF, pulled off a 21-4, 13-21, 21-16 victory over UP's Jertie Kagalingan.

They dispute the title and the top purse of P35,000 today along with the finals in the elite, veterans-masters and veterans-non pro divisions starting at 11 a.m.

The juniors, which stakes P12,000 to each champion in various categories, and corporate finals start at 10 a.m. with the celebrity and CEO invitational tourneys set at 3 p.m.

The Philippine Star and Meralco will dispute the top P50,000 purse in the corporate category. The defending champion Star nipped AB Leisure, 4-3, while Meralco bested Robinsons Land Corp. 6-1, in the semis late Thursday.

Earlier, Velez disposed of Reyne Calimlim of Victor, 21-17, 21-8, to reach the finals of the 16-under class against Centro Atletico's Gelita Castillo, who beat GSF's Bianca Legaspi, 21-17, 21-16.

Ronnel Estanislao of Chaopai beat James Rizon of Cebu, 21-14, 21-14, to arrange a title showdown with Ralph Hidalgo for the boys' crown. Hidalgo, also of GSF, thwarted Patrique Magnaye, 21-19, 23-21.

Assumption College's Francesca Bermejo and Rina Batuigas of Iloilo clash for the ladies crown in the elite division while Antonino Gadi of Ateneo and Andrei Babad of Battledore collide for the men's singles title.

Stockinger seeks 3rd straight win

MARLON STOCKINGER OF BIREL-SFIC hopes to make it three-in-a row in the premiere Formula 125 division as the 2006 Shell Superkarting Series stages its fifth leg tomorrow at the Boomland Kart Track at the Cultural Center of the Philippine Complex.

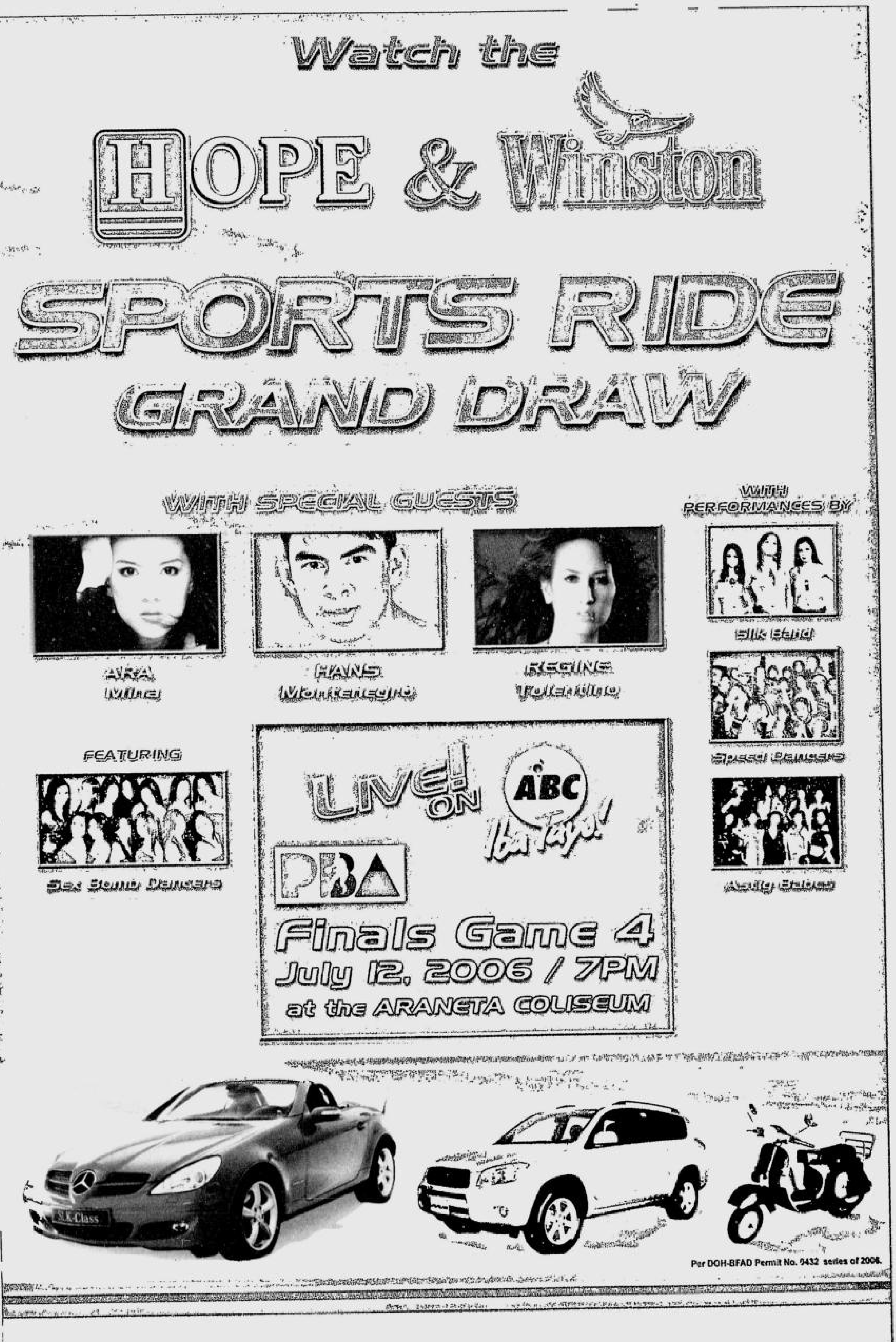
A win would firm up Stockinger's tag as one of the top title favorites in this series sanctioned by the Automobile Association Philippines

The 16-year-old Stockinger posted his first win in the third leg at the Carmona Circuit Philippines in May and bagged his second straight triumph in the Asian Karting Open Championship last month.

Ace karter Matteo Guidicelli of Alessandra Racing, who's still completing his acting and directing workshop at the Universal Studios in Los Angeles, is yet to confirm his participation. If ever, Guidicelli's absence will be a big break for Stockinger to grab the overall leadership.

Guidicelli leads the title race with 213 points while Stockinger follows with 174. Two other Birel drivers - Indy Villalon and Daniel Cleak - are third and fourth with 128 and 126 points, respectively. In the Rotax Max Seniors, Guidicelli also leads with 208 while Stockinger is close behind with 177. Villalon is third with 127 while Cleak and Eslao are fourth and fifth with 121 and 78 points.

Also favored in the race are lawyer Jess Garcia, Tiny Go and Ecuadorian expatriate Santiago Garcia. Garcia, who ruled the kickoff leg, hopes to bounce back against Cebu Racing Group teammates Manger Calderon and Jan Jan Gonzales to fortify his hold of the ROK Seniors class lead.



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SPORTS

Wimbledon on STAR Sports
Women's final—Amelie Mauresmo vs Justine Henin-Hardenne
(live, 8:30 p.m. today)
** Men's final will be aired tomorrow live at 8 p.m.*

WIMBLEDON WOMEN'S FINALE

It's Amelie vs Justine

Nadal reaches semis, faces Baghdatis next

WIMBLEDON, ENGLAND—JUSTINE HENIN-Hardenne is one victory from a career Grand Slam, and Maria Sharapova is gone from Wimbledon.

Henin-Hardenne defeated Kim Clijsters, 6-4, 7-6 (4), Thursday to reach the final and close in on the one major title missing from her collection.

The third-seeded Henin-Hardenne will face No. 1 Amelie Mauresmo, who squandered a 3-1, love-40 lead against serve in the second set before putting away Sharapova, 6-3, 3-6, 6-2.

Saturday's championship will be a rematch of this year's Australian Open final in which Henin-Hardenne quit because of stomach pain while trailing, 6-1, 2-0, handing the Frenchwoman her first Grand Slam title.

French Open champion Rafael Nadal advanced to the men's semifinals by beating Finland's Jarkko Nieminen, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4. Their quarterfinal was postponed Wednesday after Jonas Bjorkman's five-set victory over Radek Stepanek took 6½ hours, including two rain delays totaling 2½ hours.,

Mauresmo, who had lost in the semifinals in her last three stints at Wimbledon, looked like she might throw away her breakthrough chance against the 19-year-old Russian.

After dominating the first set with a performance that included just one unforced error (a double fault), Mauresmo held three break points with a chance to go up 4-1 in the second. She has a reputation for getting tight and, sure enough, she faltered. The fourth-seeded Sharapova reeled off five straight games to take the set.

But it was Mauresmo who came out stronger in the final set, racing out to a 4-0 lead. Sharapova won the next two games and had a break point for 4-3, but Mauresmo saved it with a 112 mph (180 kph) ace. She broke in the next game to end the 2 hour, 13-minute match.

Mauresmo has lost five of her nine career matches against Henin-Hardenne.

"I'm expecting a tough one," she said.

Henin-Hardenne reached the Wimbledon final in 2001, losing to Venus Williams. Since then, she has won three French Opens and one US Open and Australian Open.

Nadal will face Marcos Baghdatis, who upset 2002 champion Lleyton Hewitt, 6-1, 5-7, 7-6 (5), 6-2, on Wednesday. *AP*

AMELIE Mauresmo celebrates winning a point against Maria Sharapova. REUTERS

Perfect Logistics Phils., Inc.
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World Cup final: Everything could boil down to fatigue

HAMELN, GERMANY—THE DEBATE is which will matter more—a day or 30 minutes.

As France and Italy prepare for Sunday's World Cup final, much discussion has been given to who will be fittest at kickoff. France will have one day less to recover and prepare following its 1-0 semifinal victory over Portugal, but Italy, which beat Germany 2-0 on Tuesday, had to play 30 minutes of extra time.

"We will know only at the end of the match," said coach Raymond Domenech, still looking tired Thursday after returning from Munich in the south to Les Bleus' training camp in northern Germany.

Italy was happy to say both disadvantages would cancel each other.

"We played extra time so we are even. There is no advantage," Italian team manager Luigi Riva said.

Within four weeks, the two teams will have played seven matches and both teams needed to field their best lineups in the final first-round game to advance, leaving little opportunity to rest players.

Fatigue showed on Wednesday, when France found it increasingly difficult to contain the attacking Portuguese.

"They forced us into a great deal of effort. It is true that we were wasted," Domenech said. "Now, we have three days of recovery."

France is a special case, since almost half its team can be considered veterans with limited ability to recover.

Up to now though, the players such as defender Lilian Thuram and Zinedine Zidane, both 34, have not succumbed to fatigue or injury.

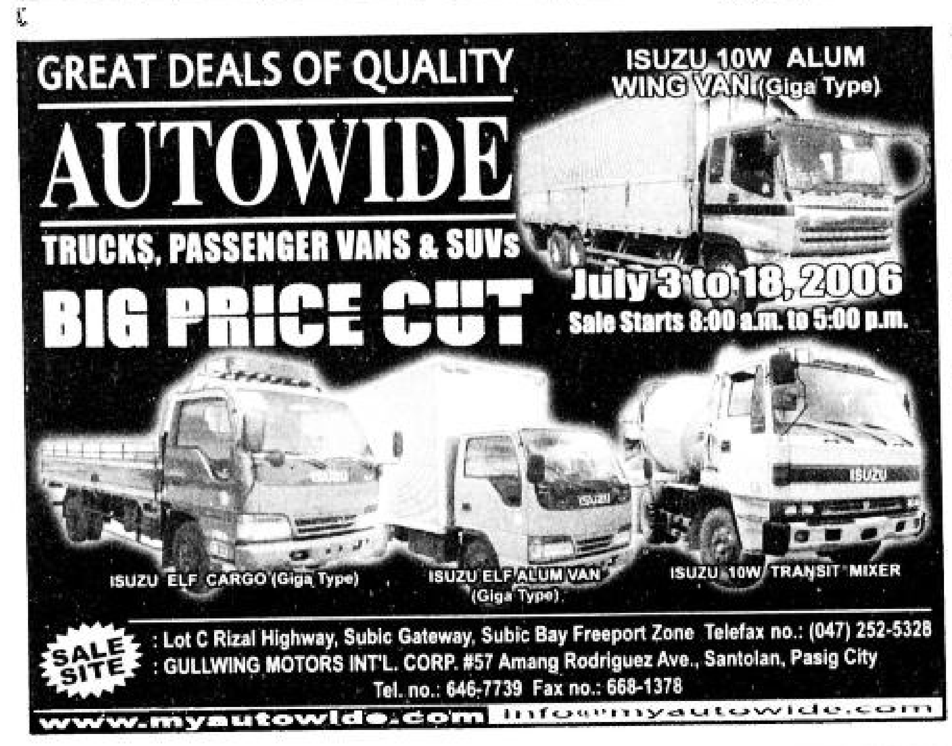
"I don't consider them old. At 30, 35, you can still run and prepare. It is the inner belief which makes the difference," he said.

Even more important than tired legs, will be tired minds. The players have been living together for about seven weeks.

"The mental aspects will make the difference," Domenech said.

The prize on Sunday however will also help the work rate.

"Somehow, the final will give everybody wings," Domenech said. *AP*



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OSCAR Freire of Spain (left) raises his hand in triumph after crossing the finish line ahead of everybody else to win the fifth stage of the 93rd Tour de France. Among those he beat was overall Tour leader Tom Boonen of Belgium (right) who managed to hold on to the yellow jersey in the stage that took cyclists from Beauvais to Caen, in northwest France. AP

Yellow jersey puts a little pressure on Tour leader

CAEN, FRANCE—HERE'S A TOUR DE FRANCE riddle: After so many years of riding in Lance Armstrong's wake, how will his heir—whoever it may be—cope with the pressure of wearing the race leader's yellow jersey as the finish in Paris nears?

It's a question some favorites are already asking themselves.

"I've imagined it enough. I think it'll be normal. I'll be all right," American Floyd Landis said after safely completing Thursday's stage five,. which was won by three-time former world champion Oscar Freire in a sprint finish.

Race leader Tom Boonen, who placed second, is learning all about the added weight that comes with trying to hang onto the prized jersey that seven-time champion Armstrong made his own from 1999-2005.

"It's been causing a lot of strain," said the world champion, whose lead over Australian Michael Rogers grew Thursday to 13 seconds. Freire vaulted from 20th to third overall, bumping George Hincapie of the United States down to fourth, both 17 seconds behind Boonen.

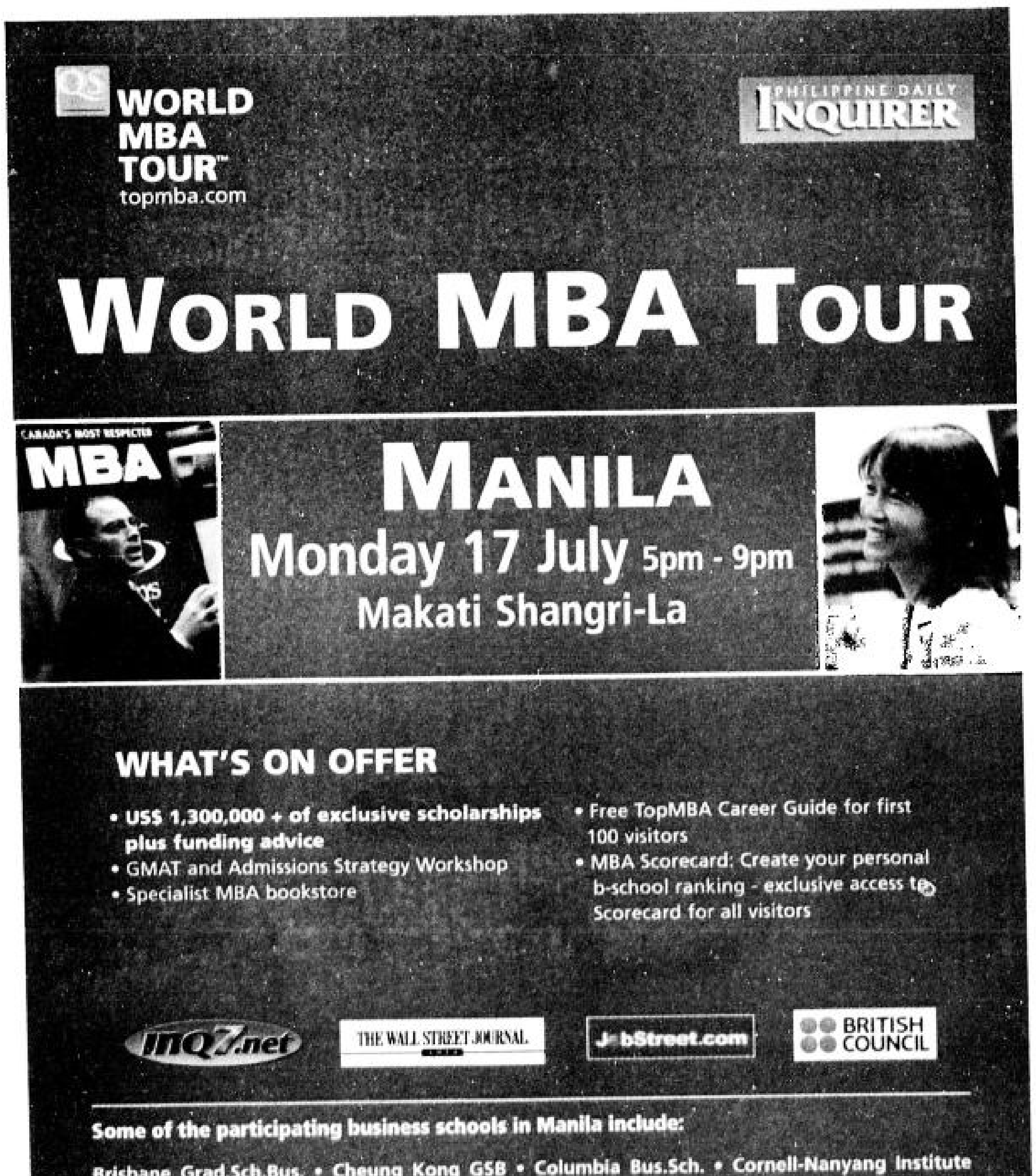
"It's more heavy for me because I'm not supposed to wear it," the Belgian said of the yellow shirt that he first took on Tuesday and will wear for a third day straight on Friday's stage six, which marks the end of the first week.

Landis, who already has three stage-race wins under his belt this year, is the kind of rider that could be wearing yellow when the Tour heads out of the Alps back toward the finish in Paris on July 23.

The Pennsylvanian is a solid time-trialer and mountain climber and learned from the best. He and Armstrong were teammates before Landis switched to the Swiss outfit Phonak. *AP*

Mickleson takes Western lead

LEMONT, ILLINOIS—PHIL MICKELSON, bouncing back in his first event since a final-round meltdown cost him a US Open title, eagled his final hole here Thursday to move one stroke off the US PGA Western Open lead. The US veteran's four-under par 67 left him one stroke behind co-leaders Daniel Chopra of Sweden, David McKenzie of Australia and Americans Joe Ogilvie and Lucas Glover at the five million-dollar tournament. Mickelson sought his third consecutive major crown last month at Winged Foot but a double-bogey on the 18th hole left the left-hander a loser. Returning here at Cog Hill with a 10th-tee start, Mickelson began with a pair of bogeys but birdied the 13th and 15th to make the turn at par. World No. 1 Tiger Woods, a three-time Western Open champion, stumbled to a one-over 72 to share 82nd place. He managed only 13 greens in regulation and just nine of 14 fairways. *AFP*



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Cinemalaya entry dramatizes pursuit of 'Happiness'

By Ronald G. Mangubat

"SAAN NAGTATAGO SI HAPPINESS?," Media Revolution Film Productions' first digital film venture and entry in this year's Cinemalaya filmfest, promises to be one of the more important local films produced this year.

Breath of fresh air

We've read the screenplay, joined the line reading, and visited the set twice, and from what we have observed, this film, produced by sisters Rica and Raquel Arevalo, should be a breath of fresh air after the current crop of heavy dramas, comedies, and horror, fantasy and action flicks that have been flooding the local film market of late.

First, "Happiness" is a light comedy, semi-musical film with original songs and entertaining dance numbers.

Second, its lead star, veteran comedian, musical theater actor and singing champion Andy Bais, is perfect for the role of Tikyo, a single, middle-aged ice cream vendor searching for his long-lost mother.

Colorful characters

In the process, Tikyo's remarkably kind soul touches the lives of the people in his neighborhood—a decrepit urban tenement inhabited by colorful characters who are chasing their own rainbows in their quest for elusive happiness.

More importantly, "Happiness" unveils insights on love, faith, trust and the beauty of life amidst the fetid squalor of urban slums.

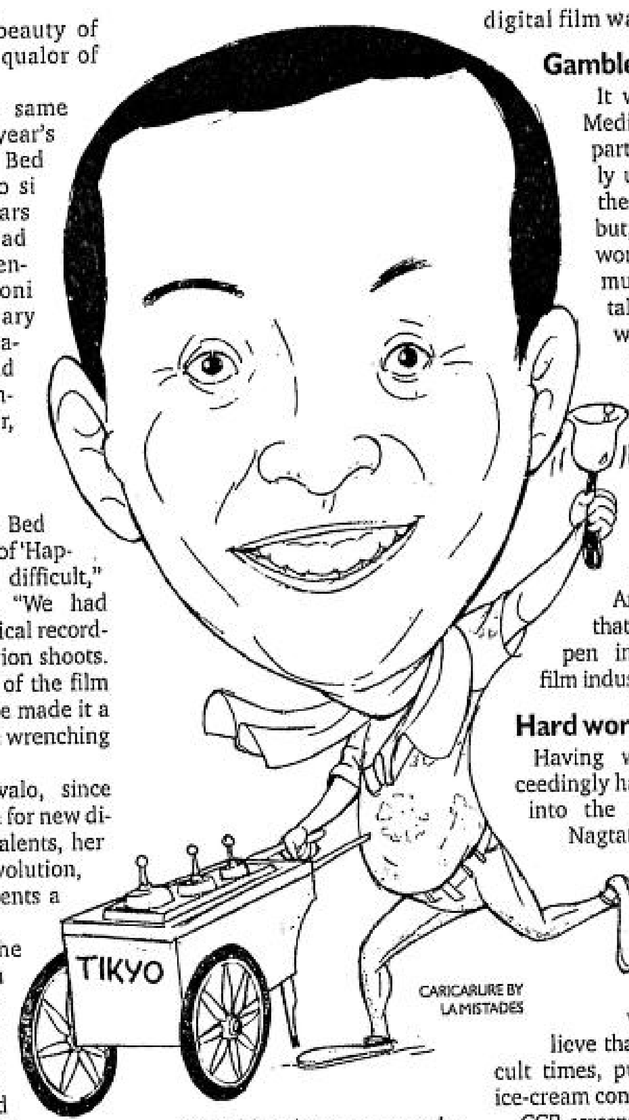
Produced by the same team behind last year's award-winning "ICU Bed #7," "Saan Nagtatago si Happiness?" also stars Ricky Davao, Caridad Snachez, Nanette Inventor, Rez Cortez, Noni Buencamino, January Isaac and child sensations, Mica Torre and recent Singapore filmfest best actor winner, Elijah Castillo.

Doubly difficult

"Compared to 'ICU Bed #7,' the requirements of 'Happiness' were doubly difficult," says producer Rica. "We had dance rehearsals, musical recordings and various location shoots. The look and texture of the film are very Tondo, but we made it a point to go beyond the wrenching realities of poverty."

According to Arevalo, since Cinemalaya is a venue for new directoirs, writers and talents, her new outfit, Media Revolution, gave her former students a break.

"Practically, the whole production team—from the writers and director (Florida Bautista) to the crew—is composed of my former students," Arevalo quips. "I want them to experience the new digital film wave!"



CARICATURE BY LA MISTADES

BAIS. Plays ice-cream vendor who makes the sun shine for everyone around him.

Gamble

It was a gamble on Media Revolution's part to cast a relatively unknown actor in the lead role of Tikyo but, in Arevalo's words, "We believe so much in Andy Bais' talent—the script was tailor-made for him."

In the same light, veteran actors like Inventor, Sanchez, Cortez, Buencamino and Davao gladly played support to Andy, something that doesn't often happen in the mainstream film industry.

Hard work

Having witnessed the exceedingly hard work that went into the making of "Saan Nagtatago si Happiness?," we trust that this film will both delight and inspire viewers, especially those who continue to believe that, despite the difficult times, pure joy is just—an ice-cream cone away!

CCP screenings: July 18, 6:15 p.m.; July 20, 3:30 p.m.; July 21, 9 p.m., and July 22 at 10 a.m.

Toti and Mon's triumphs elicit praise, inspiration

By Nestor U. Torre

PEOPLE KEEP COMPLAINING THAT MOST show biz luminaries think only of themselves and contribute little to the nation's life by way of achievements and inspiration for others.

Today, let's look at the other, brighter side of the picture, and celebrate two of the few artists whose exceptional, selfless work and lives motivate us to also inspire others in our own spheres:

Admiration

For years now, Toti Fuentes has galvanized the attention and admiration of many people, not just with his outstanding musical talent but also due to his battle against a rare form of cancer. As Toti himself sees it, he should have died years ago, were it not for an experimental anti-cancer treatment, of which he is among the first recipients in the States.

Even with the state-of-the-science treatment, however, Toti's physical well-being is a roller-coaster ride of frequent disappointments and occasional relief. Which is why we believe that what are really keeping Toti on his feet—and on his musical toes—are his love for sharing through performing—and his unsinkable fortitude.

To connect again with the internationally-acclaimed musical director (he's played for the stellar likes of Kevin Lettau, Aretha Franklin, Tony Orlando and Julia Fordham) and plug into his life-affirming vibe, catch Toti in concert in "Cheers to Life with Toti Fuentes" at 10 tonight at Merk's Bar Bistro, Greenbelt 3. Call 757-4720.

Jazz exponent

For his part, master jazz exponent Mon David recently thrilled his countrymen when he won the top plum in the first London International Jazz competition. The award-winning singer and songwriter has jammed with the best artists here and abroad, including David Benoit, Eric Marienthal, Peter White, Boney James and Bobby Enriquez.

He has won Katha awards for best R&B vocal performance for "You're the Love in My Life," best Latin composition and best Latin vocal performance for "After the Rain," best traditional composition for "Hanggang Saan, Hanggang Kailan," and best traditional performance for "Mananatiling Mahal."

His other honors include best vocalist in the first City Jazz Achievement Awards, Audience Favorite and Sony Audio Talent Award in the Voice of Asia singing competitions, best record producer for "Mga Kuwento ng Apo," and CMMA best original Filipino jazz music for the album, "Salamat sa Alaala."

Resilience

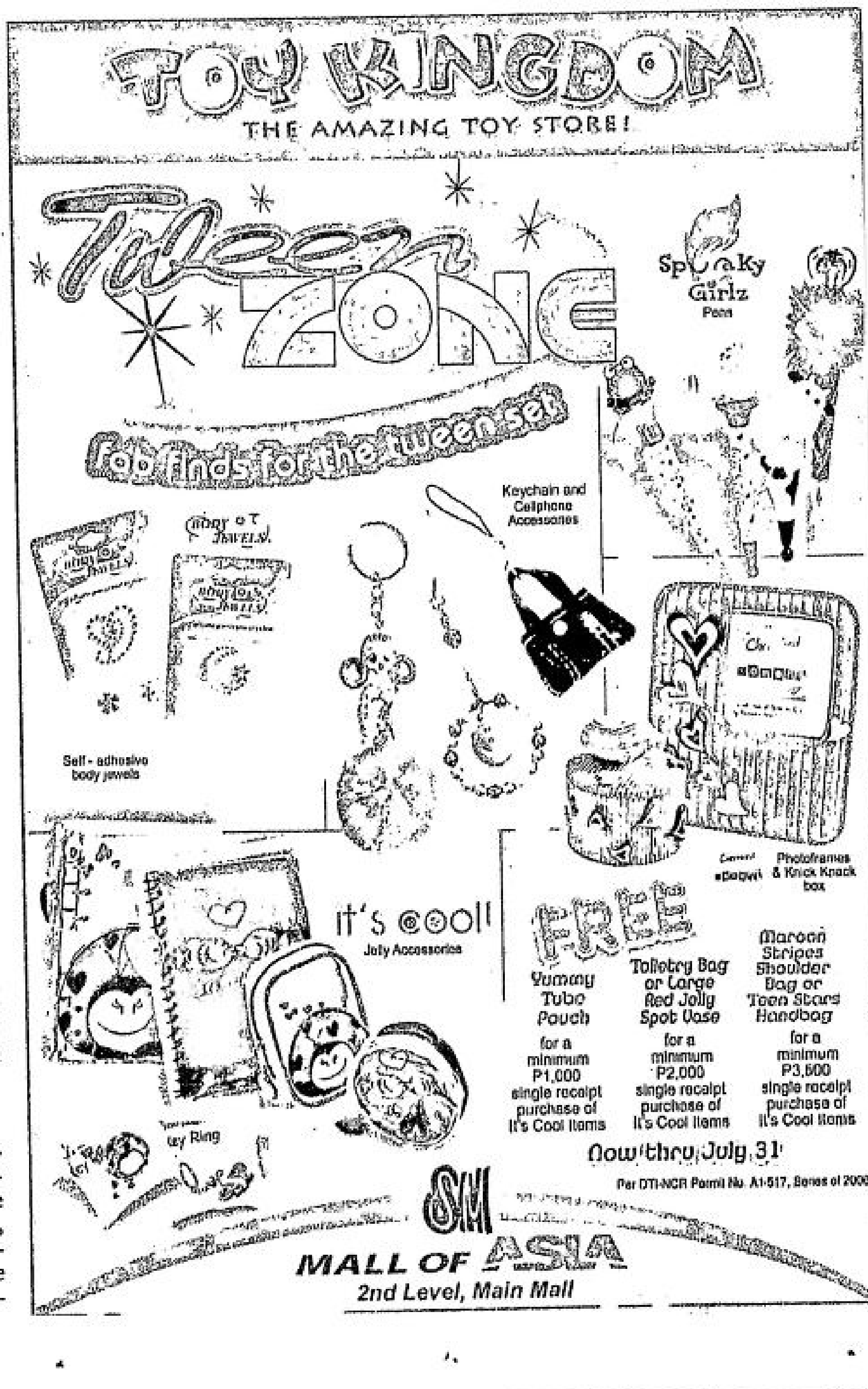
Beyond awards, Mon is even more admirable for his artistic fortitude—and resilience. Most other artists steer clear of the jazz mode because it isn't mainstream. But, Mon has embraced it with a passion that excites the musical cognoscenti and has made jazz (in its various variations and adumbrations) appeal to a wider audience.

Mon may be primarily a jazz artist, but he's also steeped himself in a wide range of music-pop, rock, ballad, standard, musical theater and classical. He even used to be 25 percent of the popular music-comedy act, The Angfourgettables!

Best of all, Mon inspires us with his musical integrity and selfless espousal of musical forms that should be appreciated by many more Filipino music buffs.

Be a part of this continuing process by catching Mon's concert, "Mon David—Jazz and More," tonight at Onstage, Greenbelt 1. Mon's special guest is Bituin Escalante. Call 891-9999 or 426-0103.

FUENTES AND DAVID. Fortitude and resilience.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Triumphant return for the Man of Steel

By Noelani Torre

IT'S IRONIC, YOU HAVE TO ADMIT, that the superhero who embodies all of humanity's best qualities is not, in fact, a member of the human race.

Superman, despite his appellation, is an alien. Nevertheless, he is a universal icon of all the good things that man is capable of doing.

Perhaps, this is why we haven't allowed the Man of Steel to cross over into camp territory, in spite of the cape, the primary colors, and the underwear-over-tights look. He is too good to be true—but, that's the way we want him.

Downside

The downside to this is that, though we admire somebody who looks drop-dead gorgeous, has a heart of gold, and possesses amazing powers, we find it easier to relate to darker, more human characters. (Case in point: The guy with the bat suit, who walked away with this year's MTV movie award for best hero.)

In movies, we have a larger emotional investment in a hero struggling to become one. Still, with the right handling, even we, flawed beings, can relate to perfection—and this is exactly what director Bryan Singer achieves in "Superman Returns."

Successor

A worthy successor to 1978's "Superman" and 1980's "Superman II," this long-awaited sequel gives us back the Superman we know and love, but with smoother-looking moves and just a little bit more shading around the edges.

ROUTH. Huge boots to fill.

Brandon Routh steps into the hard-to-fill red boots of Christopher Reeve, and despite not being the definitive Superman, manages to make them seem his own.

Picking up where the first two movies ended, "Superman Returns" has the Man of Steel returning to Earth after an abrupt five-year disappearance.

Issues

Things have changed a bit: Lois Lane (Kate Bosworth) now has a son (Tristan Lake Leabu), a live-in fiancé (James Marsden), and a Pulitzer Prize. Obviously, she has issues. Oh, and Lex Luthor (Kevin Spacey) is still around.

If you're a fan of the previous movies, you'll notice familiar elements. It feels like a homage to the Richard Donner original, what with lines being lifted, classic shots getting re-shot, and the posthumous presence of Marlon Brando.

Sometimes, it approaches the point of slavish imitation, but it's quite effective in invoking nostalgia for the Caped Kryptonian of our childhood.

Missteps

"Superman Returns" is an enjoyable watch, though plagued by missteps in slow pacing and an uninteresting Lois Lane. Still, some scenes work particularly well, and Clark Kent's undisguised yearning for Lois betrays an emotional vulnerability that makes him more human, and easier to love than his usual, perfect self.

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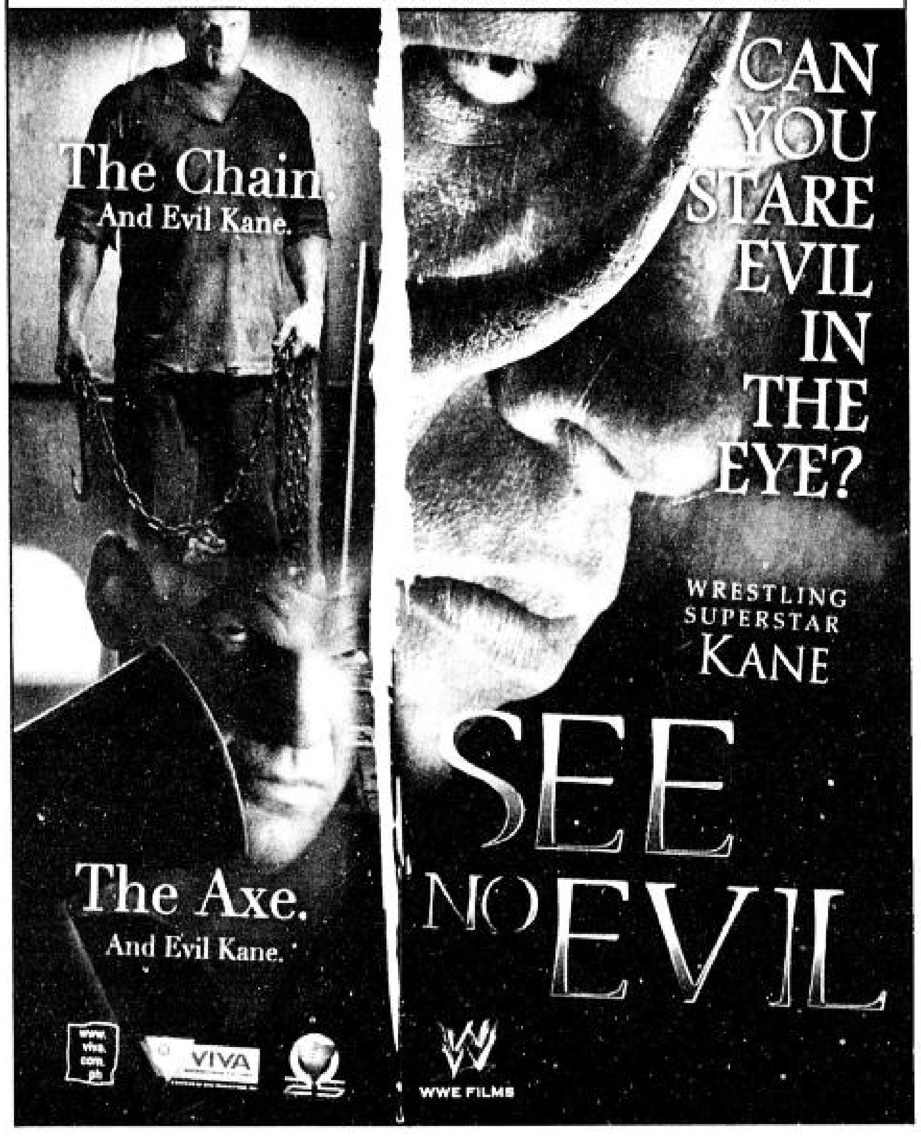
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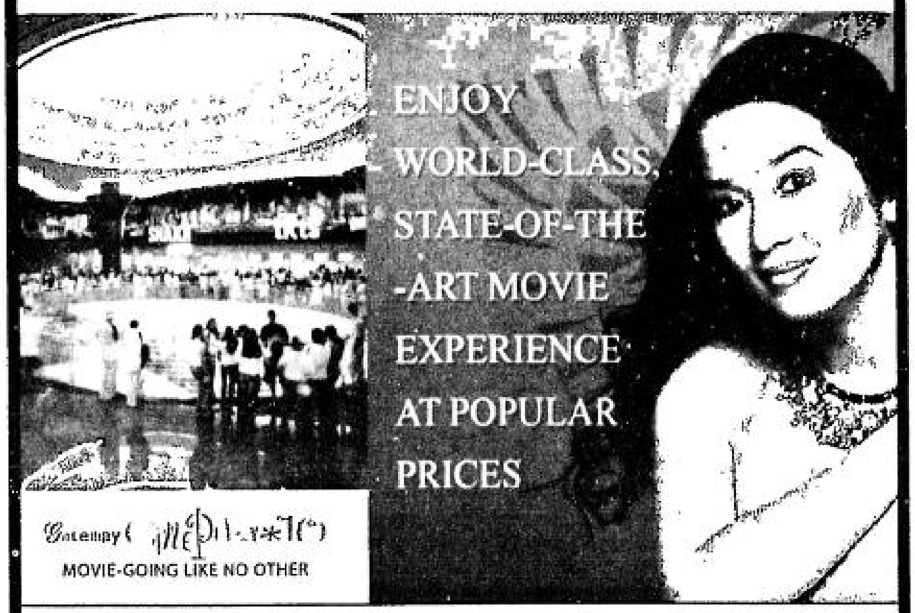
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Stargazing on the Great White Way

By Behn Cervantes

AS A STUDENT AT COLUMbia University in New York in the mid-'60s, in between joining anti-Vietnam War rallies, going to Broadway shows was my main preoccupation.

Broadway productions were relatively cheap then I would write to my gangmates, Lino Brocka, Joonee Gamboa and Adul de Leon, about those wonderful experiences and wished they were there to share them with me.

ROGERS. Special dance number in "Hello Dolly."

Musical

I watched Anne Bancroft and Jason Robards in "The Devils of Luodanne," Lee Remick in "Wait Until Dark," and Sammy Davies in "Golden Boy," a musical that showcased the talented dynamo's versatility, vocal range and great sense of rhythm. Later, I watched him get into a stretch limo after his tumultuous performance.

I caught Henry Fonda in a rather forgettable play, but it was the chance to see the actor in person that prompted me to take advantage of the bargain-priced matinee tickets.

I was also quite taken by Christopher Plummer's performance in "The Royal Hunt of the Sun," where he alternately played both an Incan leader and a Spanish conquistador.

Spectacular

I watched Julie Harris in the musical, "Skyscraper." It wasn't a spectacular production, but since Harris was James Dean's leading in "East of Eden," how could I pass up the chance to watch her onstage, and tell Lino, Joonee and Adul about it?

I saw "Hello Dolly" merely because it starred Ginger Rogers. The show's producers gave Ginger a short dance number to satisfy the fans who came only to watch her.

A good friend, Lily Dichupa, gifted me with an orchestra seat to "Sweet Charity," the biggest musical hit at the time.

When I was in Minneapolis, I watched Jessica Tandy and Hume Cromyn in a Tyrone Guthrie production of Shakespeare's "Richard III."

Amazing

Another amazing out-of-town performance I saw was Chekov's "Ivanov," starring Vivien Leigh and John Guilgud, no less!

A classmate and I sneaked into the theater to see "The Subject was Roses," starring Maureen O'Sullivan, Johnny Weismuller's Jane in "Tarzan."

I also saw Barbra Streisand in "Funny Girl," Glenda Jackson in "Marat/Sade," and the ethereal Geraldine Page in a play that never opened on Broadway. —Yummy details next week!

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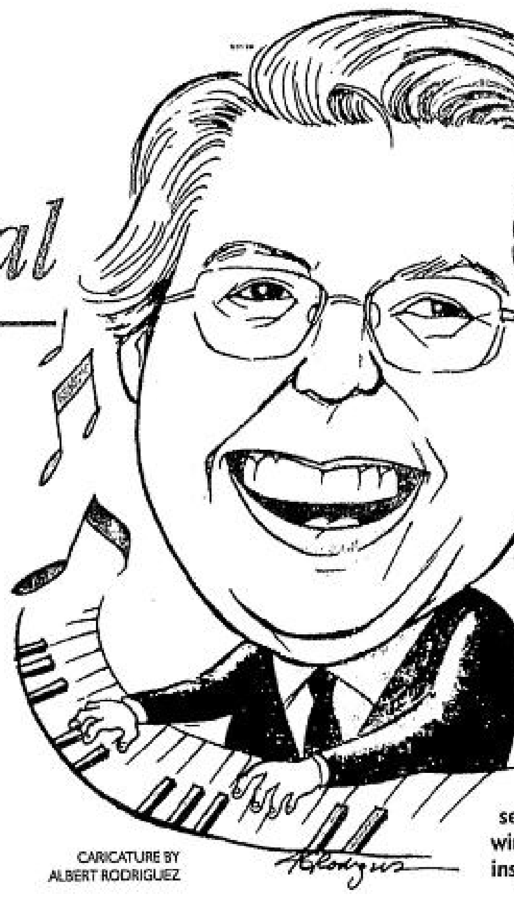
SATURDAY *Special*

Mr. C provides preview peek at 'Philippine Idol'


CARICATURE BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

CAYABYAB. The talent search's big winner should inspire Filipinos.

SHOW BIZ Q & A

Rito P. Asilo

ON JULY 29, ABC-5 SCORES A MAJOR PROgramming coup when "Philippine Idol," the local edition of "American Idol," premieres on the network.

Anticipation is building up as the talent search's debut nears: Will its judges—Pilita Corrales, Francis Magalona and Ryan Cayabyab—have as much bite as Simon Cowell? Will the show discover more Kelly Clarksons than William Hungs?

Everybody's favorite

We finally caught up with everybody's favorite Mr. C after the Mindanao auditions for "Idol." The inclusion of Cayabyab, who, unlike Corrales and Magalona, didn't have to audition to get the coveted post, is one the show's advantages. Will he assume the role of 'AI's' Mr. Mean, Simon Cowell?

Ryan explains: "The show follows the same format, but we're not required to 'copy' Simon, Paula (Abdul) or Randy (Jackson). We play ourselves. We had to go through a workshop that taught us how to tell contestants if they could proceed to the next level or not, *at kung paano bitinin ang* decision to generate excitement.

"The emphasis is on honesty. We tell contestants how they can improve their skills. *Iba ang* style *ni* Simon, he uses the same approach, but he embellishes his judgment with harsh words. He may be brutal, but he knows what he's talking about."

Choices

When we asked Cayabyab if he argues with Francis and Pilita when they don't agree on their choices, he quips: "*Hindi kami nag-aaway—hindi pa*, anyway! (laughs) *Pero, may* instances *na nagkakagulatan kami sa* choices *ng isa't-isa. Sa umpisa, takot kaming mag*-turn down *ng* contestants, we always backed up each other's choices.

"*Iba-iba ang pananaw namin sa* performance . . . and those differences are what we bring to the show. Pilita has six decades' worth of experience. She sees *kung sino ang magla*-last. She doesn't mince words. Francis, on the other hand, champions a different cause: He's not impressed by *birit* and *sigaw—isa 'yan sa* crusades *niya. Ako, mas* technical. I look at things in a more musical context.

"*Ayaw namin ng masyadong maraming kulot, lalo na kung nawawala na ang* melody *ng kanta. Kung hindi mo alam ang* lyrics, *bagsak ka na agad, kasi hindi mo pinag-aralan ang kanta.* The choice of song can make or break a contestant, so you have to sing a song that fits you."

Villains

"Initially, we didn't want to be perceived as villains, but eventually—and surprisingly—*parang ako ang naging* villain *sa aming tatlo! Makikita mo sa* Manila auditions (laughs)."

Cayabyab, who has always championed Filipino talent, admits that the task of choosing just one big winner is daunting. He recalls: "*Sumakit ang ulo ko—ang daming magagaling*! The show has attracted a certain sector of *Pinoy* talents who don't usually audition for Disneyland, 'Miss Saigon,' 'Pinoy Pop Superstar' or 'Pinoy Big Brother.' We were overwhelmed by the turnout—there were so many excellent, good-looking, charismatic performers who wanted to try their luck.

"In the Manila leg alone, only 50 slots were available, but we ended up accommodating 115 people *sa dami ng magagaling*. We will have around 170 candidates from the Visayas and Mindanao. In the succeeding rounds, they will be asked to learn and perform portions of songs, *at doon namin tatanggalin ang mahihina*—from 80, 60, down to 40. After that, they will start singing in trios and quartets. As judges, we will choose who will make it to the Top 24, then we will present them to the public for judging."

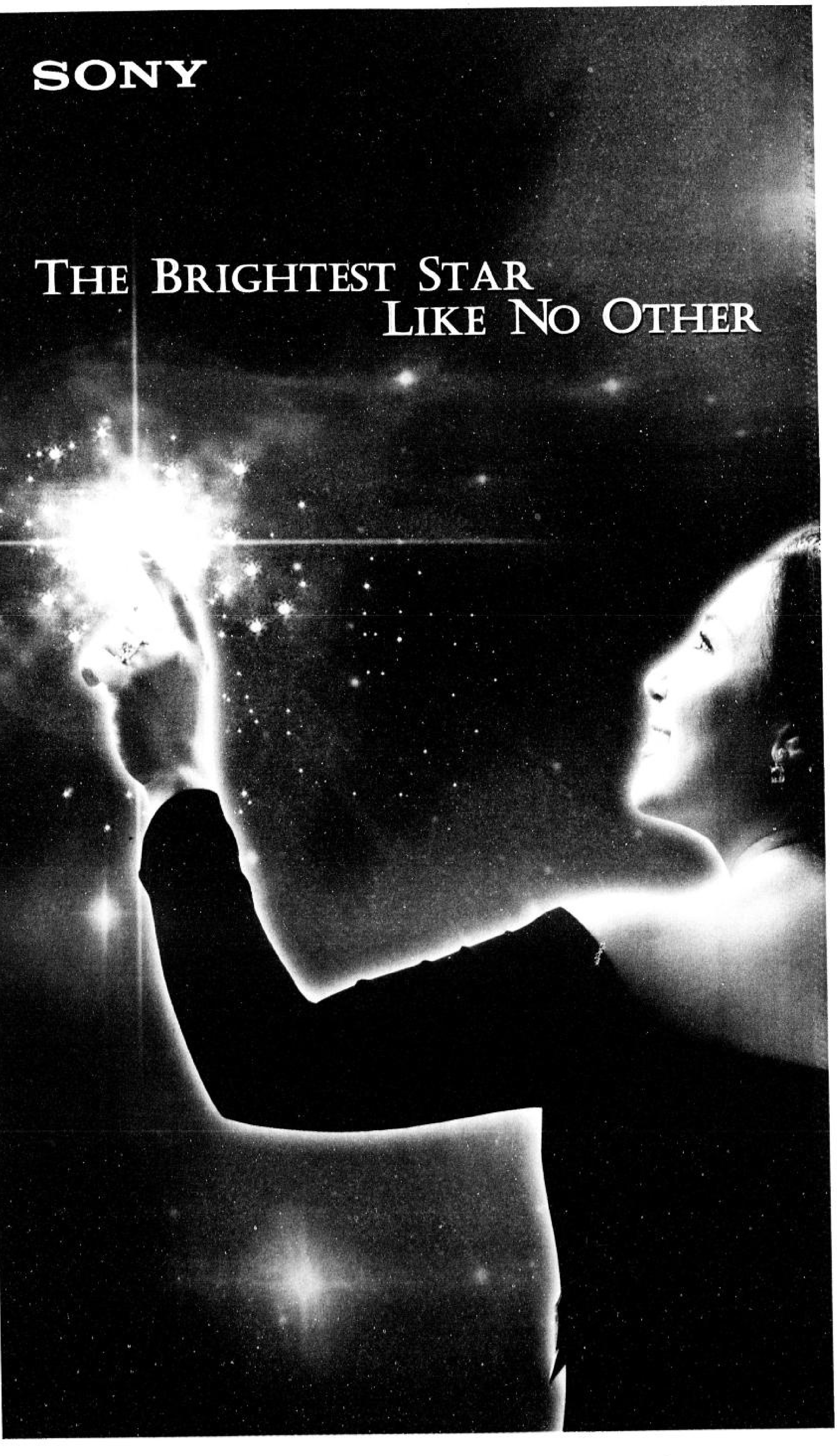
MAGALONA AND CORRALES. He doesn't like *birit*, she doesn't mince words.

Rejection

So, have you had William Hungs in the tryouts? Mr. C reveals: "The show will show the best *and* the worst of the lot. You'll see some emotions flaring up—a number of auditionees couldn't take rejection well. Some begged and cried for another chance. But, unlike 'AI,' the Pinoy contestants were generally *mababait* and polite—and we didn't have as many weirdos as those we saw on 'AI.'" (laughs)

A "Philippine Idol," he says, has to be an extraordinary performer: "*Hindi ka lang dapat basta magaling kumanta.* And, good looks can

MR. C's/ A3-2



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ORDOÑEZ (second from right) with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (center) and officers of PRI.

Revenue in retirement

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Mandy Navasero

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Mr. C provides. . .

From page A3-1

only do so much. In fact, sometimes, they're a disadvantage, *kasi nawawala ang* focus *sa* ability *mo*. You also have to be original—there can only be one Basil, Martin, Gary or Regine. You'll never go the extra mile *kung meron kang ginagaya!*"

Cayabyab shares that he rooted for Taylor Hicks since Day One. "American Idol's" most recent big winner has proven that talent and charisma can trounce beauty and youth in a talent search—and win an entire nation's nod.

Ryan adds: "The winner of 'Philippine Idol' has to do the same—he has to be able to inspire the Filipino people!"

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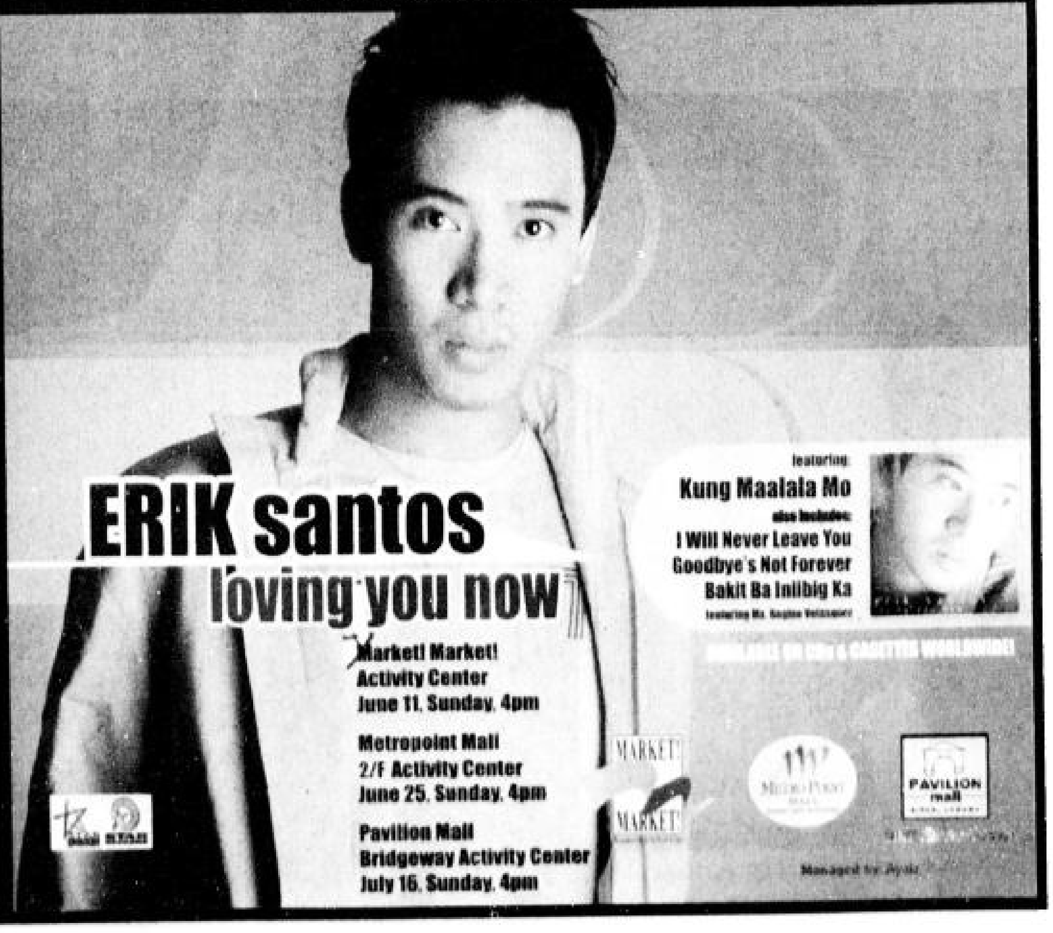

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Metropoint Mall
2/F Activity Center
June 25, Sunday, 4pm

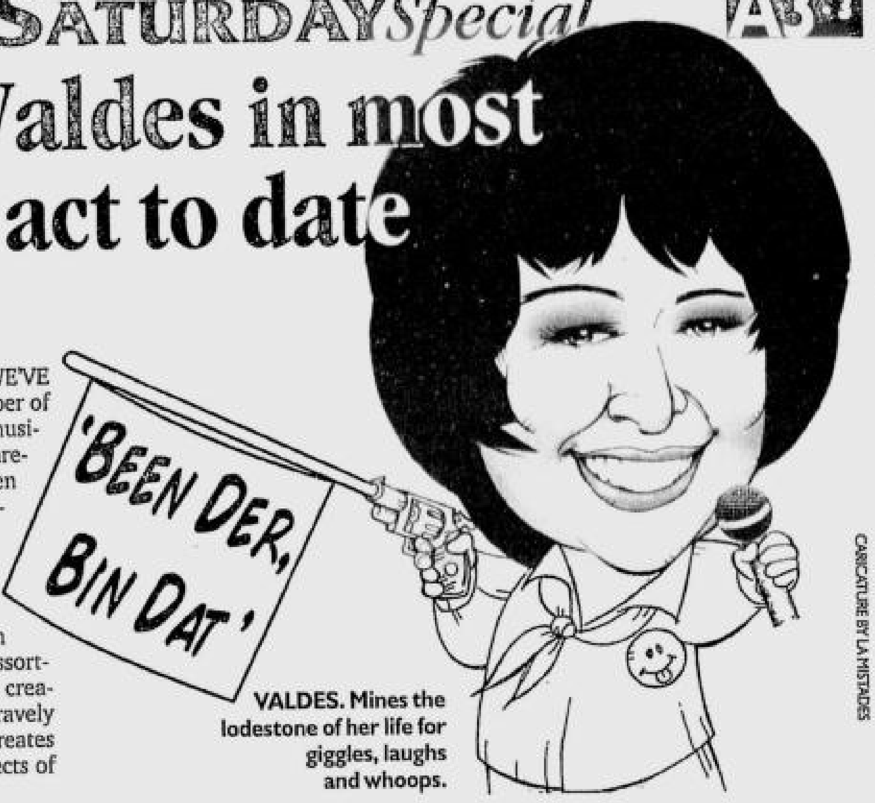
Pavilion Mall
Bridgeway Activity Center
July 16, Sunday, 4pm

featuring
Kung Maalala Mo
also includes:
I Will Never Leave You
Goodbye's Not Forever
Bakit Ba Iniibig Ka

Managed by Ayala

Mitch Valdes in most daring act to date

By Nestor U. Torre



VALDES. Mines the lodestone of her life for giggles, laughs and whoops.

CARICATURE BY LA MISTADES

OVER THE PAST YEARS, WE'VE seen Mitch Valdes in a number of challenging one-woman musical-comedy acts. But, we daresay that her latest show, "Been Der, Bin Dat" at the Mandarin hotel's Captain's Bar, is her most daring standup performance to date.

No, Mitch doesn't take off her clothes and engage in interesting activities with assorted objects and compliant creatures, she simply and bravely goes out on a limb and creates comedy from different aspects of her life.

What's so new and extra-daring about *that*? Mitch has been mining the lodestone of her life for laughs for a long time now, so the thrust isn't all that novel.

But what *is* new is the fact that, in her latest act at Captain's Bar, Mitch talks about even her unfunny experiences—and still manages to generate giggles, laughs and whoops all the way!

In stitches

Even more impressively, there were quite a number of teens and tweens in the audience when we caught the show two Fridays ago, and they didn't have the foggiest notion about the '70s TV shows, films and personalities Mitch was talking about—and yet, they too were kept in stitches by Mitch's comedic zingers and wise-gal insights about the bumbling, fumbling booboos she's made in the name of love.

Present moment

Mitch daringly wings it without a full script, and relies a lot on the present moment and the different ways it moves her.

Of course, she's greatly helped by her extensive experience at solo club performances, plus her singing ability, which comes in handy when she's talked herself into a corner (which hardly ever happens, anyway).

Also very helpful is the fact that, this time around, Mitch focuses her comic reminiscences on her experiences in show business. So, she name-drops popular stellar monikers that the older members of the audience are interested in, and her musical inserts flow naturally from the show biz material at hand.

Risky

When you think about it, it's really quite amazing that Mitch succeeds in her most daring and risky act to date. Watching her is like observing a high-wire artist removing the safety net beneath her, in a sort of performance death wish cannily calculated to further test and extend her limits as a crowd-pleaser.

Things got really chummy last June 30 when Mitch happily announced that her show, which was supposed to end its run that night, was being extended for all Fridays in July. Well, what are you waiting for—Christmas? Call 750-8888 ext. 2446 or 721-0635.

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"Exuberant ~wd pleaser!" Ruel de Vera, ~E DAILY INQUIRER
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GALLERIA 632-9116

Cinema	Schedule
1 SUPERMAN RETURNS • THX	12:00 3:10 6:20 9:30
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS	12:30 3:40 6:50 10:00
3 SEE NO EVIL	1:30 3:35 5:40 7:45 9:50
4 SUPERMAN RETURNS	11:30 2:40 5:50 9:00
5 LOVE WRECKED	11:25 1:30 3:35 5:40 7:45 9:50
6 UNITED 93	12:10 2:35 5:00 7:25 9:50
7 LAKE HOUSE	1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
8 THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS 3	12:50 3:10 5:30 7:50 10:00
9 SPL	1:40 3:45 5:50 7:55 10:00
10 SCARY MOVIE 4	1:25 3:30 5:35 7:40 9:50

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

Cinema	Schedule
1 SUPERMAN RETURNS	10:20 1:15 4:10 7:05 10:00
2 UNITED 93	12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
3 SEE NO EVIL	12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00
4 SPL	10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
5 LOVE WRECKED	10:20 12:20 2.20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00
6 LAKE HOUSE	12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00
7 SUPERMAN RETURNS	12:00 3:00 6:00 9:00

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

Cinema	Schedule
1 THE NUN	1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS	11:25 2:40 5:55 9:10
3 SEE NO EVIL	12:30 2:40 4:50 7:00 9:10
4 LOVE WRECKED	12:10 2:25 4:40 6:55 9:10
5 THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS 3	1:00 3.00 5:00 7.00 9.00
6 LAKE HOUSE	1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00
7 SUPERMAN RETURNS	12:15 3:35 7:00
8 SPL	2:35 4:45 6:55 9.00

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 938-3229-30

1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 SPL
4 SEE NO EVIL

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 SCARY MOVIE 4
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-5378

1 UNITED 93
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 SEE NO EVIL
4 LOVE WRECKED

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1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS 3
3 SILENT HILL
4 THE NUN

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1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 BANDIDAS
3 AN AMERICAN HAUNTING
4 GARFIELD 2

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1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 THE NUN
3 SPL
4 SEE NO EVIL

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1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 SEE NO EVIL
3 TAKE THE LEAD
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1 THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS 3
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 SUPERMAN RETURNS
4 SUPERMAN RETURNS

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1 AN AMERICAN HAUNTING
2 THE LAST HOLIDAY
3 THE NUN
4 SEE NO EVIL
5 SUPERMAN RETURNS
6 SUPERMAN RETURNS

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1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 CHAOS
3 LAKE HOUSE
4 THE RENT
5 TAKE THE LEAD
6 THE OMEN

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2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 LAKE HOUSE
4 AN AMERICAN HAUNTING

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NOW SHOWING

Campy fun in zesty rom-com

By Rito P. Asilo

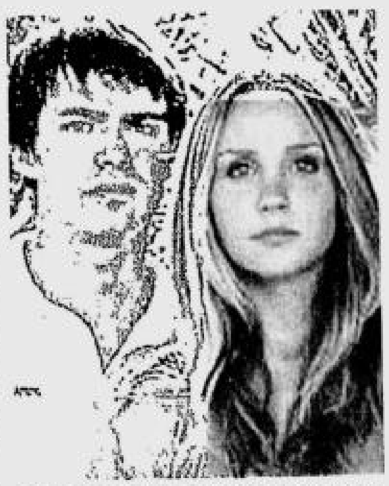
"Lovewrecked"

D: Randal Kleiser

S: Amanda Bynes, Chris Carmack, Jonathan Bennett

AMANDA BYNES ("SHE'S THE MAN") approaches her ridiculous, love-struck teenybopper roles in campy rom-coms with youthful fun, light-hearted ardor and tongue-in-cheek comic relish. And director Randal Kleiser ("Grease," "The Blue Lagoon") takes full advantage of this. Surely, you don't go to see an Amanda Bynes movie expecting to watch a substantial Meryl Streep starrer, do you?

But, the young actress' wholesome impudence always manages to sway viewers to be more forgiving of her movies' narrative implausibilities. To a certain extent, she makes them work—albeit on a superficial level. "Lovewrecked" is no different:



BENNETT AND BYNES. Wacky ride on romantic merry-go-round.

When 18-year-old Jenny Riley (Bynes) finds herself marooned on an island with rock star, Jason Masters (Chris Carmack), the man of her dreams, she doesn't know whether to be sad or glad. But, when she realizes they're just three miles away from a luxury resort, she hides this from him—and seizes the opportunity to buy time to win his heart!

Meanwhile, elsewhere in the "distant" luxury resort, Jenny's good friend, the handsome but geeky Ryan Howell (Jonathan Bennett)—who's secretly in love with her—waits for her return. When he finally finds Jenny and Jason, despite his feelings for his wacky friend, he goes along with her idea and willingly supplies the "exotic" food she feeds Jason on the "deserted" island.

However, Jenny's plans begin to backfire when her competitor, the sexy Alexis (Jamie-Lynn DiScala), gets wind of the situation—and soon becomes the third "survivor" awashed on the island. Soon after, a nasty catfight over Jason commences! Who ends up with whom in this wacky merry-go-round? Guess.

Best of everything

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Bismark

SO MUCH IS WRITTEN ABOUT show biz personalities—from acting achievements and looks to marriages and pregnancies. But, very little is said, written or heard about the Greatest Personality of all. In the Bhagavad-gita, the Most Glorious Entity talks about perceptions and manifestations that people should learn to appreciate:

Limitless

"The Supreme Person said to Arjuna: 'I will tell you of my splendorous manifestations; my opulence is limitless. I sit in the heart of all creatures. I am the beginning, middle and end of all beings.

"'Of lights, I am the radiant sun and, among the stars, I am the moon. Of bodies of water, I am the ocean. Of weapons, I am the thunderbolt. Among subduers, I am time. Of purifiers, I am the wind. I am the spiritual science of the Self. Among logicians, I am the conclusive truth. I am splendor, victory, adventure, and the strength of the strong!

Silence

"'For those who seek victory, I am morality. Of secret things, I am silence. For the wise, I am wisdom. I am the generating seed of existence. No being exists without me. Beautiful, glorious and mighty creations spring from the spark of my splendor.'"

Knowing and serving Him should be the goal of our existence. Only then will we achieve the best of everything.

Dinosaurs rule at Hallmark Channel

THIS MONTH ON THE HALLMARK CHANNEL, "Dinotopia" presents a secret world where dinosaurs and humans co-exist in harmony. Premiering July 10 to 14 at 8 p.m., "Dinotopia, The Miniseries" features five episodes featuring two young boys interacting with digital dinosaurs created by London's FrameStone. The series has reaped many awards for its outstanding visual effects and animation.

MONTAGE

On July 16 at 9 p.m. in "Dinotopia: The Outsider," a band of ruthless island looters have taken over what's left of paradise and discovers the key to its collapse.

On July 23 at 9 p.m., "Dinotopia: The Election" turns the peaceful city into a congested metropolis. Could extinction be far behind? —Not with the blessed event that occurs—the birth of a dinosaur.

And, on July 30 at 9 p.m., "Dinotopia: New Horizons," where humans and dinosaurs are exposed to the time-warping secrets of a stranger's life, and the sporting pleasure of the competitive world their new friend Frank has left behind.

Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards

The much-awaited 2006 Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards Preview Party is happening today at the Aliw Theater, CCP Complex, Pasay City. Hosted by Noel dela Rosa and Alexa Ortega, this year's party is going to be a "circus-centric" celebration that's big on fun, laughter—and of course, slime!

Plus, favorite guest performers Sandwich and Sam Concepcion, and celebrities galore. Nickelodeon superstars, Spongebob SquarePants and Patrick Star, will join the celebration.

Snippets of the 19th Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards will also be shown. This year's "Pinoy Wannabe" nominees are Sam Milby, Concepcion, Iza Calzado, Manny Pacquiao and Bianca Gonzales.

At noon on July 15, the whole Nickelodeon Kids' Choice Awards event will be shown. It's hosted by Jack Black and showcases stellar appearances by Will Smith, Lindsay Lohan, Chris Rock, Kelly Clarkson, Robin Williams and many others.

Movies on TV

On HBO, July 8 at 3 p.m., "The Big Preview: Pirates of the Caribbean—Dead Man's Chest." July 9 at 11:15 a.m., "The Stepford Wives." July 10 at 12:15 p.m., "Wag the Dog." 9 p.m., "The Manchurian Candidate." July 11 at 7:20 p.m., "After the Sunset." 10:45 p.m., "The School of Rock." July 12 at 9 a.m., "A Thousand Acres." July 13 at 7:30 p.m., "Mad Dog and Glory." July 14 at 5:15 p.m., "If Lucy Fell."

On Cinemax, July 8 at 9:35 a.m., "The Outlaw Josey Wales." July 9 at 9 p.m., "The Last Samurai." July 10 at 2:55 p.m., "Mr. Deeds Goes to Town." July 11 at 11 p.m., "Mystic River." July 12 at 12:40 p.m., "Phantom of the Rue Morgue." July 13 at 8 a.m., "Cat Ballou." July 14 at 2 p.m., "The Notorious Landlady." July 15 at 7:30 p.m., "I Accuse."

FORD AND ZUBIRI. Topbill "Firewall" and "I Wanna Be Happy," respectively.

'Firewall'

Warner Home Video has released the Harrison Ford starrer, "Firewall," on video. The special promo VCD or DVD package includes a limited VCD pack of three other Ford starrers: "Frantic," "Presumed Innocent" and "The Fugitive."

In "Firewall," Ford plays a bank security chief who has designed a computer system and firewall to protect his employer from fraud. One day, however, he's ambushed and finds himself staring down a gun barrel.

Acting with the best of them

Diana Zubiri is justifiably proud of her performance in "I Wanna Be Happy," which opens on July 12. In the Seiko comedy by Joey Reyes, Diana doesn't go sexy and instead acquits herself well in dramatic scenes with outstanding actors like Eddie Garcia, Gloria Romero and Cherry Pie Picache. "I Wanna Be Happy" was graded "B" by the Cinema Evaluation Board.

Shamrock

The popular Shamrock Band performs at 5 p.m. today at SM Bacoor, as part of its "Are You Serious?" mall tour.

'GamePlan'

At 1:30 p.m. on July 9, "GamePlan" on Studio 23 has hosts Paolo Soler and Wowie Meloto visiting the Elorde Boxing Gym, breakdancing with the crew of Battle Dynamics Philippines, and tripping with "total misfit," Ramon Bautista.

'RV' sneak previews

Robin Williams' new family comedy, "RV," will have sneak previews on July 10 and 11 in selected theaters nationwide. The film is about the "vacation from hell" that Williams' dysfunctional family goes on in a recreational vehicle that seems to have an even crazier mind of its own.

Do You Have Dyspepsia?

Parang tambol ang tiyan. May kabag. Masakit ang sikmura. If you frequently experience these symptoms, you may have a common stomach condition known as Dyspepsia.

What is Dyspepsia?
Dyspepsia is a recurring discomfort in the chest and stomach regions. Aside from **bloating, gas** and **stomach pains,** other symptoms include **heavy stomach, fullness** and **nausea.**

Dyspeptic symptoms usually appear when stomach movement slows down and food does not empty from the stomach. These symptoms often follow meals, but can occur anytime.

Treatment
Frequent remedies taken for Dyspepsia-like symptoms are drinks like tea, soft drinks or antacids. These remedies may relieve some, but not all of the symptoms of Dyspepsia.

A class of medication called Prokinetics can relieve Dyspeptic symptoms by restoring motility or normal stomach movement. Prokinetic drugs are what most doctors prescribe for Dyspepsia. The most prescribed Prokinetic drug is Domperidone, available in 10mg tablet form.

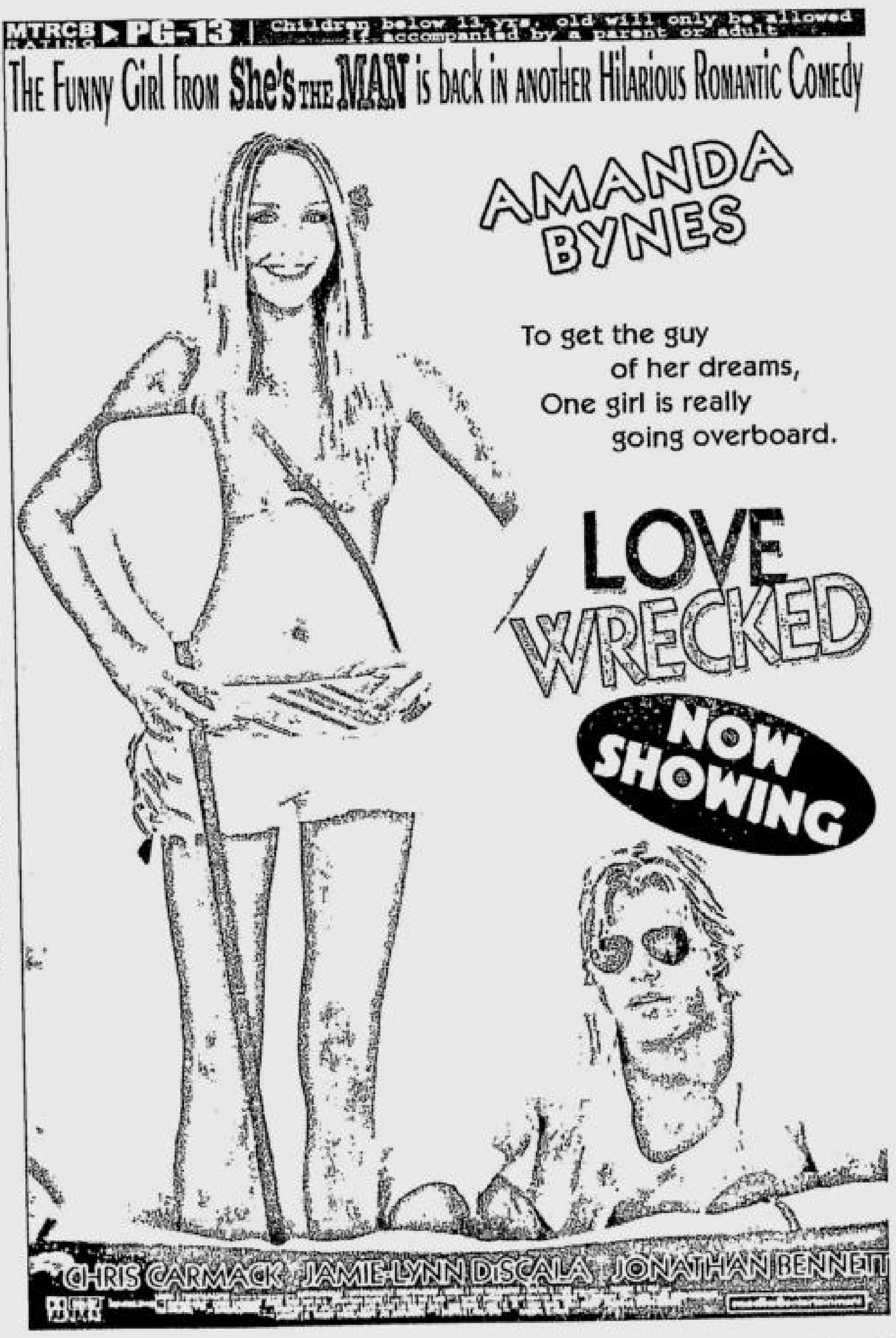
See Your Doctor
If symptoms persist, it is best to see your doctor. A Philippine Society of Gastroenterology (PSG) doctor will recommend the right treatment for Dyspepsia.

By Dr. Ramon E. Carpio
Chairman, Council on Dyspepsia
Philippine Society of Gastroenterology

Sa Dyspepsia,

Domperidone
Motilium
10 mg tablet

If symptoms persist, consult your doctor.



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IN THIS ISSUE

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- **IT, BPO firms set to tap** rich European markets /B7

A new record has been set on just one full tank of Petron Xtra Unleaded.

Peso rallies vs dollar

Closes at 2-month high of 52.35 to $1

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO YESTERDAY GAINED 38 CENTAVOS to close at a two-month high of 52.35 against the dollar as the regional financial markets cheered rosier investment prospects alongside peaking interest rates in the United States.

The local currency has swung back to being a net gainer against the dollar so far this year, moving 1.4-percent higher since ending at 53.09:$1 in 2005.

"The market has already digested the fact that our economic fundamentals are strong," Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said.

"The US economy is handicapped by uncertainties about the dollar. There's a long-term view that the US dollar is poised to depreciate," Guinigundo added.

Trading was bullish across currency markets in the region, led by the Indonesian rupiah, which surged after Bank Indonesia hinted of an aggressive reduction in interest rates, in turn seen to benefit the local bond market.

After ending at 52.73 on Thursday, the peso opened stronger at 52.63, which marked its intra-day low, and strengthened throughout the day to close near the day's high of 52.34 against the dollar.

The closing rate of 52.35 yesterday was the currency's strongest finish since the 52.15:$1 on May 15.

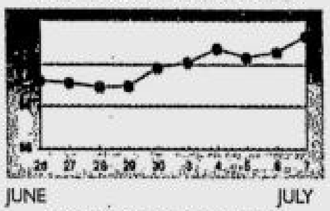
Volume traded at the Philippine Dealing System likewise swelled to $589.2 million yesterday from the previous day's $460.42 million.

"Corporate demand for dollars thinned after the rush at month's end so there's room for the peso to test 52.25 to 53.15 to $1," Banco de Oro Universal Bank chief

PESO/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

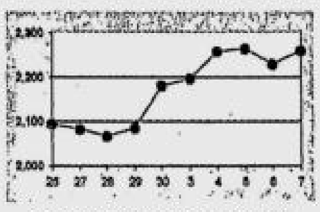


PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 52.35 = $1

As of 5 p.m., July 7, 2006

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Shares close 1.35% higher

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 1.35 percent higher yesterday as investors picked up bargains after Thursday's sharp sell-off, dealers said.

They also drew inspiration from Wall Street's advance and a rally in commodity and metals prices overnight which gave the miners a boost.

SHARES/ B2

TOURISM Secretary Joseph "Ace" Durano recently met with Francesco Frangialli, secretary general of the United Nations World Tourism Organization at the UNWTO headquarters on Capital Haya in Madrid, Spain. Secretary Durano was part of the presidential party during the state visit to Spain and took the opportunity to discuss the Philippines' formal bid to host the 5th UNWTO forum for local authorities and parliamentarians with interest in tourism in Manila for 2007. This three-day forum is expected to attract some 400 parliamentarians from UNWTO member countries worldwide.

Changing gov't policies to deter mine investors

By Daxim L. Lucas

LARGE, FOREIGN MINING FIRMS WILL BE deterred from investing in the country if the government continues to vacillate on its policies for the mining sector, a leading advocate of the industry warned yesterday.

In an interview, Chamber of Mines of the Philippines president Benjamin Philip Romualdez pointed out that foreign investors were critical for the development of the mining industry since local companies lacked the capital to exploit the full potential of the

GOV'T/ B2

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Court stops SEC from holding owners' meet for Philcomsat unit

Resolution of ownership row remains hanging

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE COURT OF APPEALS HAS STOPPED the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) from ordering the holding of a stockholders' meeting for Philcomsat Holdings Corp. (PHC).

PHC is 80-percent owned by satellite technology pioneer Philippine Commmunications Satellite Corp. (Philcomsat). Both companies are owned by Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp. (POTC) whose shares were sequestered by the Aquino administration in 1986 on allegations that these were acquired using ill-gotten wealth.

The appellate court's order was issued last July 5 by the special 14th division and was signed by Associate Justice Vicente Roxas.

The CA issued a temporary restraining order in favor of a petition filed by PHC president Manuel Nieto Jr. last April 11 against the SEC and its general counsel, Vernette Umali-Paco.

Nieto's petition asked the CA to prevent the SEC from implementing two orders—one dated Feb. 26 and another issued on April 4 this year—creating a nomination and election committee and calling for an annual stockholder's meeting of PHC last May 4.

PHC was able to hold a special stockholders' meeting but not an annual stockholders' meeting, which would have elected the new PHC board. The special meeting held in May was only to extend PHC's corporate life.

The SEC stopped the holding of an annual stockholders' meeting of PHC after the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) appealed a decision made by an SEC-led nomelec in PHC that validated the proxies of Philcomsat president Victor Africa.

The PCGG contested Africa's proxies, claiming it owned majority of Philcomsat's shares and should be the one represented in PHC.

These issues are now pending with the CA.

The CA's July 5 order granted the TRO for a period of 60 days from the day the notice is served.

The SEC was also directed to comment within 10 days from the receipt of the CA's order.

Shareholders of POTC, Philcomsat and PHC have been embroiled in an almost decade-long legal feud for control of the three companies. On one side is the group of the 90-year-old Nieto. On the other are the Ilusorio, Africa and Ponce-Enrile families.

The Africa group, one of the founding shareholders of Philcomsat, said the feud started in 1998 when the Nieto group allegedly turned a social gathering into a stockholders' meeting that installed the latter on the board of Philcomsat.

Another version was that the feud started over a sibling rivalry involving a second generation of shareholders in the Philcomsat group. At stake now in the cash-rich PHC are assets worth P1.5 billion.

GMA-7 gives up channel 27 slot

By Daxim L. Lucas

GMA NETWORK INC. HAS DROPPED ITS plan to transmit the television signals of a subsidiary over the channel 27 slot of Lopez family-owned Central Cable TV or SkyCable.

The unexpected move comes even after telecommunications regulators ruled in favor of GMA Network in its dispute with SkyCable over the channel assignment, effectively giving the former the right to displace the ABS-CBN News Channel (ANC) from the channel 27 slot.

Instead, GMA Network released a statement yesterday saying that its Quality Television (QTV) 11 programs would be made available on the channel 24 slot of both SkyCable and its down-market unit Home Cable starting July 12.

GMA Network spokesperson Butch Raquel declined to disclose the reason for the firm's sudden about face, saying only in a text message that the move "was the subject of an agreement between both parties."

The network's official statement said the new channel assignment was decided on "after broadcast authorities from both GMA Network and Central CATV formally signed an agreement recently."

Network officials familiar with the controversy said, however, that GMA Network's plan to take over the channel 27 slot was not technically feasible from the start.

"Broadcasting a very high frequency (VHF) channel on the same slot on cable and over the airwaves will cause interference to the signal," the official said, requesting anonymity. "The signal will be compromised, just like what happens during microphone feedback."

Despite this, GMA Network pressed ahead with its complaint before the National Telecommunications Commission "as a point of principle," another official said, referring to the bitter network war between GMA-7 and it's larger rival ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp., which is owned by the same Lopez family that owns SkyCable.

In its statement, GMA Network said the deal with SkyCable stipulated that "programs that currently air [over] ZOE Channel 11 and GMA UHF Channel 27 will be carried and/or aired by Central CATV (SkyCable and Home Cable) [over] cable channel 24."

WELD YOUR DREAMS. Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) Administrator Armand Arreza (2nd from right) and Olongapo City Vice Mayor Rolen Paulino (3rd from right) observe a Korean instructor of Hanjin Heavy Industries and Construction Co. demonstrate the use of a high-tech welding machine, commonly found in shipyards worldwide. The first batch of 100 local trainees will receive rigid training on the use of shipyard machines for three months in the most modern training center, built by HHIC at a cost of P40 million in Subic, Zambales, before their deployment for work in the shipyard at the Redondo Peninsula. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

URC hikes stake in Robinson's Land

BRANDED SNACK FOOD COMPANY UNIversal Robina Corp. has raised its stake in sister property firm Robinsons Land Corp. to between 18 and 19 percent after acquiring shares owned by JG Summit Holdings affiliate Express Holdings Inc. in the property developer.

In a separate disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), URC said it acquired 293.62 million shares of Express Holdings representing roughly 13 percent, which will add to URC's existing 5.1 percent in the property developer.

Sources said the acquisition was done two years ago but the transaction was reflected only now after the Gokongwei group secured certain regulatory approvals.

The disclosure is also being done in preparation for RLC's planned share offering.

With the transaction, Express Holdings will no longer hold shares in RLC. JG Summit Holdings, the Gokongwei family's flagship company, is the biggest shareholder in RLC with 72.2 percent.

RLC closed at P10.75 a share yesterday.

RLC is planning to raise $220 million in fresh capital but may have to defer its plans as it awaits for regional markets to stabilize. RLC was earlier considering to offer the new shares this month.

"If the market opens up good, the offering will happen this year," RLC president Lance Gokongwei earlier said.

Sources said RLC may push through with the proposed offer either in the fourth quarter or within the first quarter next year.

RLC's share offer will consist of up to 932.8 million shares, of which up to 450 million shares will be the primary offer or involve newly issued shares.

The price will be computed based on the average trading price of RLC's shares during the 10 days preceding the pricing date of the offer, subject to a discount of up to 10 percent. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

Changing gov't policies . . .

From page B1

country's metal and mineral reserves.

"There will always be noise [from opponents of mining] in any country," he said, referring to civil society, environmental and Church-oriented groups opposed to the development of the local mining sector. "That doesn't put [the potential investors] off. What will deter them is if government's policies continue to shift and change."

The administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo had initially welcomed the resurgence of the mining sector with open arms last year, but its enthusiasm has waned in recent months in the face of popular opposition to the industry.

The government is hoping to be able to tap the country's estimated $840 billion in metal and mineral reserves to help lift the country out of poverty.

Romualdez, however, welcomed the rabid opposition to mining from some sectoral groups, saying it was part of the country's "vibrant democracy."

"When an influential group like the Catholic Church objects, it makes political sense for the policymakers to listen," he said at the sidelines of the annual meeting of the Bishops-Businessmen's Conference on Human Development yesterday at the Asian Institute of Management. "And they should listen to these ideas."

During the forum, representatives of various groups took turns assailing the government's mining policies, citing the dangers to the environment and to the social order.

Sorsogon Bishop Arturo M. Bastes was particularly vocal, since his diocese encompasses the site of the controversial Rapu-Rapu mining operation.

"I'm disappointed and I'm fearful for what will happen," he said. "[Mining] is a danger to the environment, and there is great danger [for] the future."

Despite this, the influential Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) appeared to have softened its stance against the controversial industry.

In an interview yesterday, CBCP president and Jaro Archbishop Angel M. Lagdameo said he was now open to dialogue with concerned parties about the possibility of allowing "sustainable mining" in the country.

"We can talk about responsible mining," he said. "We are open to suggestions."

Romualdez lamented that the forum failed to highlight the benefits of mining to the local economy and to the local communities.

He predicted that the mining industry would march on, regardless of the opposition being raised against it.

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Peso . . .

From page B1

market strategist Jonathan Ravelas said.

"There's very limited appreciation after this because there are still uncertainties, so we may see some pullback, but this pullback will be limited to 52.95-53:$1," Ravelas said.

Currency traders said that across the region, many analysts were starting to bet that emerging markets in Asia would be able to lure back investors who were earlier distracted by the interest rate increases in the United States.

The higher bond yield in New York as influenced by the series of increases in the US Federal Reserve's overnight rates from 1 to 5.25 percent over the last 17 meetings has lured more global investors back to dollar-denominated assets, causing the shift in risk appetite away from emerging markets like the Philippines.

In response, many central banks have similarly raised their interest rates to make local assets more attractive. While the BSP has not ruled out a rate increase later this year, its outlook was that inflation would slow down starting the second semester.

"The BSP's overnight rates are aligned to inflation-targeting. Inflation looks contained so there's no reason unless there's too much pressure on the currency and so far the pressure is manageable," ING Bank Philippines treasurer Consuelo Garcia said.

"Right now, they have successfully managed to justify why they shouldn't (rush into following the Fed's moves)," she said.

By the end of the year, Garcia said the US Fed would likely start reversing the tight monetary policy seen over the last two years.

"Therefore, the pressure on local interest rates will ease over the long term," she said.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of July 7, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5.7	6	5.7	5.7	59,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	31.5	32	31.5	31.5	273,100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	50.5	51.5	50.5	51	2,026,200
Citystate Savings Bank	20.5	20.5	20.5	20.5	600
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	74.5	74.5	74	74	600
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	36	36	35.5	35.5	264,800
Philippine National Bank	33	33	33	33	2,400
Phil. Savings Bank	38.5	39	38.5	39	4,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	18.5	19.25	18.5	19.25	178,900
Security Bank Corp.	47	47.5	47	47	45,700
Union Bank of the Phil.	44	45	44	45	7,000
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
First Metro Invest. Corp	31	31	31	31	10,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1640	1660	1640	1660	390
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1	1	0.99	0.99	120,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	210	210	210	210	22,700
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2030	2030	2030	2030	110
Ivantage Corp.	1.28	1.28	1.24	1.24	831,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	43	43.5	43	43.5	571,700
First Phil Hldgs Corp	45	46	45	45.5	1,538,000
Manila Electric Co. "A"	14.75	15.25	14.75	15.25	60,300
Manila Electric Co. "B"	22.5	23.5	22.5	23.25	2,988,300
Manila Water Co. Inc.	7.5	7.7	7.5	7.7	1,442,000
Petron Corp.	3.9	4	3.9	3.95	3,135,000
Trans-Asia Oil And Energy	0.96	0.97	0.95	0.95	2,390,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3	3	3	3	7,000
CADP Group Corp.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	62,000
Cen Azucar de Tarlac	5	5	5	5	3,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23	23.5	23	23.25	506,300
Jollibee Foods Corp.	32	32.5	32	32.5	812,400
Pancake House Inc.	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	900,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	3.05	3.15	3	3.1	925,000
San Miguel Corp. "A"	64.5	65.5	64.5	65.5	88,400
San Miguel Corp. "B"	71	71.5	71	71	291,800
Phil Tob Flue Cur & Redry	10.25	10.25	10	10	164,700
Universal Robina Corp.	18.25	18.5	18	18.5	785,800
Vitarich Corp.	0.2	0.21	0.2	0.21	890,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	600,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.52	1.56	1.52	1.56	3,177,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	1.32	1.32	1.26	1.26	67,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	75,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	216,000
CHEMICALS					
Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	1,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.62	0.62	0.62	0.62	30,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.0925	0.0975	0.09	.097	41,600,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg "A"	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	126,000,000
Ayala Corp.	382.5	405	382.5	402.5	306,790
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.2	5.4	5.2	5.4	357,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.76	1.8	1.76	1.76	1,266,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	14,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.99	0.99	0.98	0.98	470,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp	1.3	1.32	1.3	1.32	14,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10	10	10	10	1,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.06	1.12	1.06	1.1	25,590,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.85	3.9	3.85	3.9	287,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	2.7	2.75	2.7	2.75	14,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc	6	6.1	6	6.1	217,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	10,000
Prime Orion Phils., Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	270,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.58	0.58	0.57	0.57	100,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	1,700,000
SM Investments Corp.	214	215	213	214	197,380
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.76	0.76	0.76	0.76	100,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.085	0.085	0.08	0.08	700,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	12	12.25	12	12	6,281,500
Belle Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.06	1.06	1,877,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	30,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	580,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.98	2.2	1.96	2.1	18,041,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.55	0.56	0.54	0.56	8,610,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.3	1.3	1,324,000
Golesco Land Inc.	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	100,000
Interport Res.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	2,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.21	0.21	0.2	0.2	890,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.44	0.45	0.41	0.42	860,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.44	1.46	1.44	1.46	10,870,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.21	0.21	0.205	0.205	6,650,000
Primex Corp.	3.65	3.65	3.65	3.65	30,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	10.75	10.75	10.5	10.75	17,900
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.29	1,480,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.8	7.9	7.8	7.9	353,000
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	100,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	500,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp	16.5	17	16.5	16.75	179,700
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	30,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc	1.24	1.26	1.24	1.26	1,262,000
Globe Telecom Inc	945	960	945	960	52,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.5	3.55	3.5	3.55	1,862,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1935	1975	1935	1960	135,560
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.19	0.195	0.185	0.185	1,020,000
Imperial Res	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	1,000,000
Ionics Inc.	2.06	2.06	2.06	2.06	150,000
Ism Communications Corp.	0.049	0.05	0.049	0.05	7,100,000
Music Semiconductors Corp	1.2	1.24	1.2	1.2	1,000
Philweb Corp.	0.033	0.033	0.033	0.033	10,000,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	300,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	13.75	14.5	13.75	14.5	1,891,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.32	1.36	1.32	1.32	1,670,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc	0.25	0.25	0.23	0.25	950,000
EDUCATION					
Ipeople Inc	3.05	3.05	3.05	3.05	60,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.02	2.02	2	2	120,000
Paxys Inc	11.25	11.5	11.25	11.5	225,000
Prime Gaming Phils., Inc.	35	35	35	35	8,100
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.008	0.008	0.0075	0.008	15,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8.1	8.2	7.9	8	1,327,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. "A"	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	13,540,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co "B"	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.33	7,750,000
Manila Mining Corp. "A"	0.023	0.023	0.022	0.022	129,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. "B"	0.025	0.025	0.024	0.024	166,900,000
Philex Mining Corp. "A"	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.2	6,817,000
Philex Mining Corp. "B"	4.4	4.4	4.15	4.25	10,527,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	27.5	28	27.5	28	350,900
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	600,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.57	0.57	0.55	0.55	350,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	820,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. "A"	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	14,400,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. "B"	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	30,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. "A"	1.34	1.34	1.28	1.28	1,592,000
The Philodrill Corp. "B"	1.32	1.32	1.28	1.28	558,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp	17.25	17.5	17.25	17.25	61,700
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series N	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT REC					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	16.75	17.25	16.75	17	786,300

CURRENCIES

July 8, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.782595	1.000000	52.8[illegible]
Japan	Yen	0.006798	0.008687	0.4589
United Kingdom	Pound	1.436845	1.836000	96.9794
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.100712	0.128690	6.7975
Switzerland	Franc	0.637085	0.814067	42.9998
Canada	Dollar	0.703710	0.899200	47.4966
Singapore	Dollar	0.494843	0.632311	33.3993
Australia	Dollar	0.584288	0.746603	39.4363
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.075959	2.652661	140.1162
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.208681	0.266652	14.0848
Brunei	Dollar	0.493284	0.630318	33.2940
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000086	0.000110	0.0058
Thailand	Baht	0.020513	0.026212	1.3845
UAE	Dirham	0.213072	0.272264	14.3813
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.277800	67.4947
Argentina	Peso	0.253677	0.324149	17.1219
Brazil	Real	0.358824	0.458505	24.2187
Denmark	Kroner	0.134059	0.171300	9.0482
India	Rupee	0.017017	0.021744	1.1485
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.213562	0.272889	14.4143
Mexico	New Peso	0.070928	0.090629	4.7871
New Zealand	Dollar	0.473926	0.605563	31.9875
South Africa	Rand	0.109347	0.139723	7.3803
Korea	Won	0.000824	0.001053	0.0556
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024120	0.030821	1.6280

Shares close . . .

From page B1

The composite index added 30.18 points to 2,258.03, after trading between 2,227.85 and 2,264.43. Volume was 726.95 million shares worth P1.24 billion.

The broader all-shares index gained 13.75 points to 1,403.71.

Gainers led losers 51 to 25, with 47 stocks unchanged.

"The market has held a firm support at the 2,200 level. That's why we saw some bargain-hunting when share prices retreated to that moving average line," said Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities.

Dealers said news that several rebel soldiers had been captured also helped sentiment as it appeared to bolster President Macapagal-Arroyo's hold on power.

The market had risen for five straight sessions until Wednesday but profit-taking emerged Thursday because of North Korea's firing of missiles.

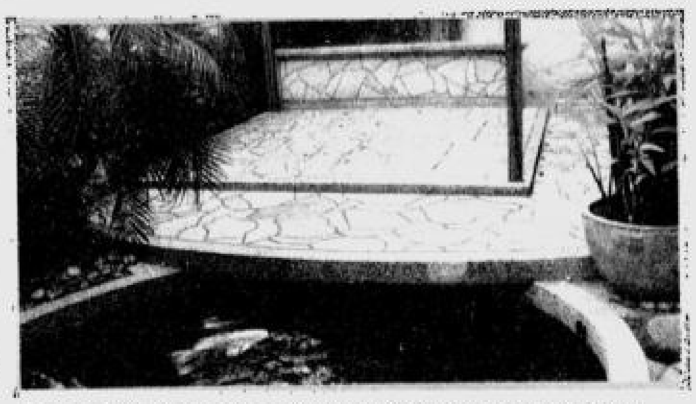
Top-traded Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. rose P25 to P1,960. Ayala Corp. advanced P17.50 to P402.50.

Meralco A-shares gained 75 centavos to P15.25. Meralco-B also rose 75 centavos to P23.25. Dealers said the outlook for the utility was bright because it could win more distribution contracts with power-generating plants that the government plans to sell off to the private sector. *AFP*

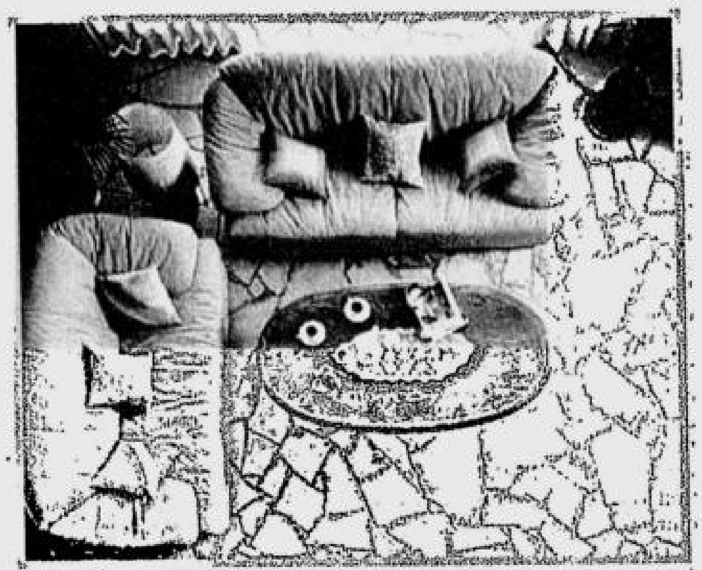
PROPERTY

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

BECAUSE OF their durability, Solnhofener limestone tiles can be used as floorings, on walkways and even as walls.



SOLNHOFENER limestone tiles' easy-to-clean and slip-resistant surface make it an ideal material for garden ponds and poolsides.



THE TILES come in several neutral colors including shades of gray, brown and golden yellow.

Unique stone material for special home projects

THE TILES' unique pattern, color and texture may be paired with other materials like stones or granite.

By Charles E. Buban

FOR HOME BUILDERS, DESIGNERS and architects, Germany is known for being the source of one of the world's most famous natural stones, the Solnhofener limestone tiles.

This type of limestone, found and quarried only in the southern part of Germany, is known for its extreme hardness, uniqueness of colors and appearance as well as timeless elegance.

"Because they possess exemplary properties suitable for construction (abrasion resistance, thermal resistance and nonslip, among others), Solnhofener limestone tiles offer numerous design ideas for outdoor and indoor application. The fact that their natural beauty harmonizes in any kind of landscaping, they can be combined to almost any building materials," said Rod Garde of Neo Bath Inc., sole distributor of the tiles in the Philippines.

Neo Bath delivers the tiles per crates which cover between 134 and 150 square meters space (cost P1,500 per sq m) and comes in flat slabs, which could be broken into much smaller pieces or patterns depending on the customer's preference.

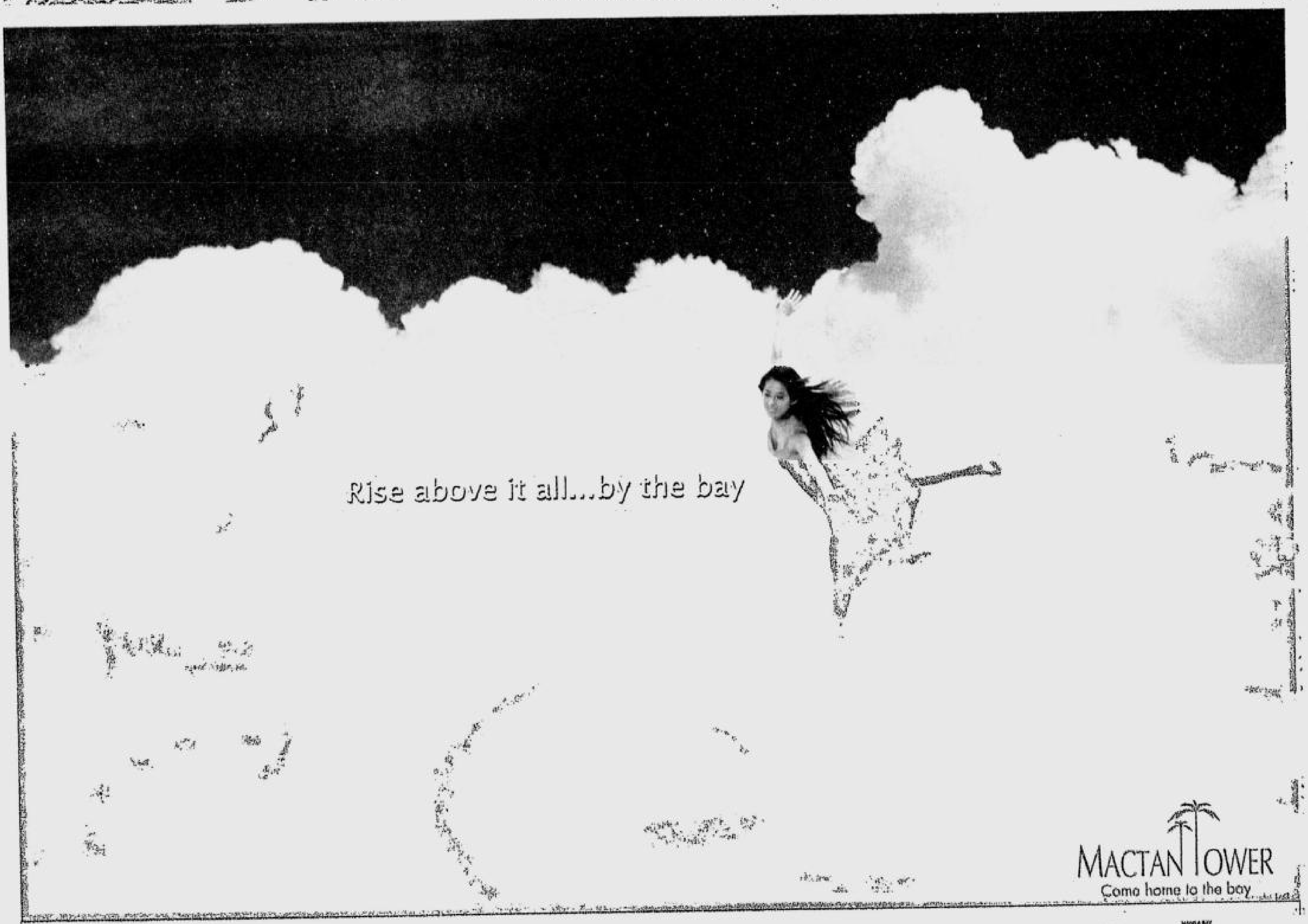
Widely used

"Elsewhere in the world, Solnhofener limestone tiles are extensively used in up-market city apartments, country houses, ancient or new buildings, as well as clubhouses, pool areas, patios, terraces, gazebos and court yards. Because they have colors that are consistent throughout the surface, have colors that do not fade, hard-wearing and easy to maintain, they could be used in a variety of applications," Garde said.

He added that the appeal of Solnhofener limestone tiles are quite different from marble, granites and other stone materials popularly used in the country.

In fact, Garde said Neo Bath has several design suggestions and applications that could be viewed in two of their showrooms located in Mandaluyong City (Ortigas Home Depot) and Taguig City (MC Home Depot, The Fort). The showrooms also provide design consultations.

"It took nature 150 million years to develop this unique building material, and the fact that it is being used for over 2,000 years elsewhere in the world, I believe it's about time we Filipinos discover the beauty that Solnhofener limestone tiles could bring to our homes," Garde said.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MACTAN TOWER at BAY GARDEN

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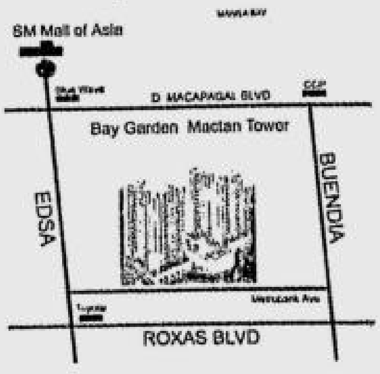


The Greening of affordable housing

GREEN ARCHITRENDS

Amado de Jesus

ECOLOGICAL HOUSING, SUSTAINable design, and green development. No matter how one calls it, they all mean the same thing—environment-friendly or green housing.

A green home is primarily a healthy home. It uses materials and resources efficiently, reduces waste, lessens pollution, provides superior indoor air quality, plenty of natural light and causes less damage to the environment. These are features that ideally should be found in our homes. Unfortunately, many of our homes are not green.

This is particularly the case with many of the affordable or low-cost homes in the country. As the cost of land appreciates and as many developers cut costs, many of these homes end up with substandard quality that affects not only the environment, but also the health of the occupants.

Much reduced sizes of units

Batas Pambansa 220 on Socialized Housing stipulates a minimum lot area of 32 square meters for a row house, 54 sq m for a duplex and 64 sq m for a single-detached unit. The minimum floor area for all types is 18 sq m.

Cost of construction has unfortunately caused the decrease in size of low-cost houses over time. This poses a challenge to developers and designers to make this type of dwelling within human standards.

Site selection

Green affordable housing developments are located in sites that are suitable for development. They are not found in sites that have very steep slopes, unstable foundations, erosion-prone areas and sites near power lines and transformers.

Green affordable housing developments are built in areas that have access to utilities, public transportation, workplaces, schools, commercial centers and other community services.

Green site development

Green development for affordable housing minimizes cutting and filling which unnecessarily alters the natural landscape.

One example of environmental destruction is when the development crews mobilize and scrape the land. Fertile topsoil originally found at the site is discarded instead of being set aside and used as ground cover later on. Discarded fertile topsoil is hauled with construction debris, and dumped in some distant overflowing landfill or dumpsite.

The topsoil that has been removed and discarded will eventually be replaced by expensive garden soil for equally expensive and exotic plants to beautify the area. These plants are normally hard to maintain and require constant irrigation. This practice further depletes our limited water supply.

Another land development malpractice is when the natural communities of animals and plants in the area, and natural resources such as wetlands, woodlands, lakes, streams and trails are destroyed. Even regional culture and vernacular building styles that give the place character and a sense of place are cast aside.

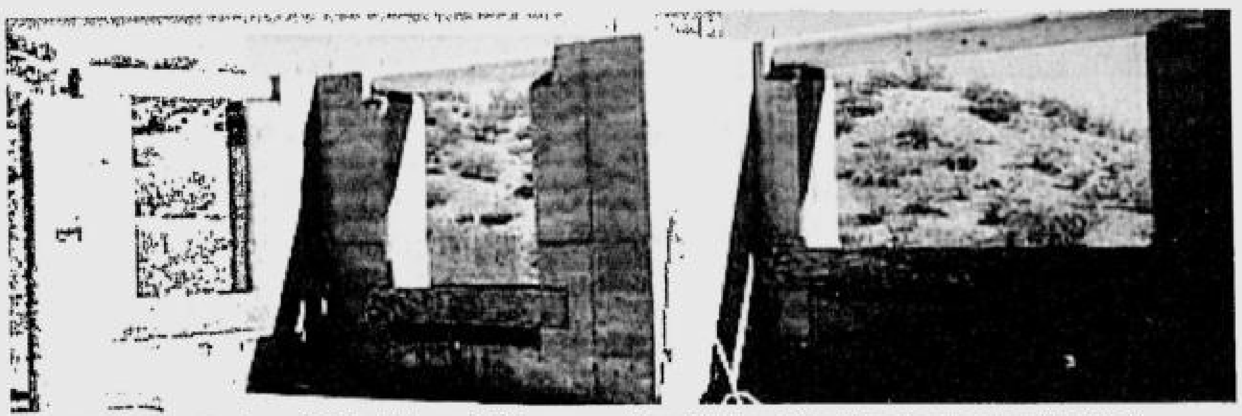
Green development espouses a "land ethic" which respects land, and does not deal with it as a commodity that we call "raw land" or "vacant lot." Restraint and careful planning in land development will reduce if not eliminate environmental destruction.

Big industry

The low-cost or affordable housing industry is big business. Many developers have been financially successful in tapping this growing business sector but despite the huge number of housing units turned over each year, private and government agencies cannot keep up with the demand.

According to the country's development plan, the need for housing in the country is estimated to reach 3.75 million units by 2010. Demand for new houses for the said period is 2.6 million of the total while housing backlog accounts for almost a million.

The challenge of meeting our country's housing needs should motivate many developers not only to make their housing units more efficient and affordable but also, more importantly to make them "green."



RAMMED earth walls, about 12-inch thick, are built by compacting a slightly moist earth and aggregate mix between formwork using mechanical/pneumatic rammers. About 5 percent cement is added to the mix. This increases the erosion resistance of the walls against driving rain.

PHOTO SOURCE: WWW.ADOBE-HOME.COM

Green vs conventional housing

How do we rate the practices of many of our affordable housing projects in terms of sustainability?

Let's cite a few cases. First and foremost, the industry is caught up in the first-cost rather than life-cycle cost mentality. First-costs refer to the cost of the house and lot and life-cycle costs refer to the long-term benefits.

For example, when we factor in energy savings over time, or increased durability or occupants' satisfaction and comfort, green design features and materials become easier to justify. It would be ideal if life-cycle costs are considered in the industry today instead of focusing solely on first-costs to justify our projects.

Regarding design, many affordable housing units these days are "beautiful" when viewed outside but are uncomfortable and impractical inside. Much emphasis is given to architectural features that are imported from other countries. Examples are small windows, steep roofs that have no soffits (or vent slats at the roof eaves and ridge) to minimize heat build-up and false or real attic spaces. Result? The thermal comfort and satisfaction of occupants is sacrificed.

Most of these houses need air-conditioning. Proper orientation has not been followed and windows have no roof overhangs to prevent unwanted heat and rain to come in.

When housing units are completed, many are fitted with incandescent bulbs because they are cheaper than the more energy-efficient compact fluorescent lamps that last longer and are brighter.

For condominiums that are not green, developers pass on the responsibility for saving energy to the owners or occupants instead of designing the building to be energy-efficient. With green buildings, such arguments are avoided because housing units are designed from the outset with low energy use in mind. Dependency on air-conditioning is also minimized because green buildings are naturally ventilated providing tenants with a healthier atmosphere that can save on health care costs.

Other green strategies

Other green features that may be incorporated in a green affordable home include the use of water-efficient toilet fixtures, rainwater collection system, landscaping appropriate to the climate, light-colored roofing and exterior walls.

A very challenging strategy for low-cost housing is the use of cheap indigenous materials like bamboo. With the country's huge land area, we can very well promote planting and use of bamboo. For housing in areas near the sea where galvanized roofing easily gets corroded, green or landscaped roofs that insulate homes could be recommended. Housing in areas regularly hit by typhoons could use rammed earth for walls; they use only 5 percent cement. Rammed earth homes are cool in summer, warm in cold season.

But isn't building green expensive?

The cost of green building can decrease or increase depending on how simple or how sophisticated the green features incorporated in the home. For example, costs can be greatly reduced by using materials with recycled-content or adopting a modular type of construction. It is obviously important to spend time in up-front design to study various green alternatives that cut costs without sacrificing health benefits.

How to get started

Develop a project team that is motivated to build a green project. Include a multidisciplinary, integrated design process that considers environmental, social and health concerns into a cost-effective design.

Perform cost/benefit analyses on major project components. Lastly, occupants and maintenance staff must be knowledgeable as to how systems work and keep the project green.

For comments or inquiries, e-mail amadodejesus@gmail.com.

BCDA hails new bridge technology for SCTEx construction

TOP OFFICIALS OF THE JAPANESE EMbassy and the Bases Conversion Development Authority launched over the weekend a new bridge construction technology for the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEx) project, which when finished will become the country's longest and most modern toll road with a distance of 93.7 kilometers.

Japanese engineers from the Kajima-Obayashi-JFE Engineering-Mitsubishi joint venture (KOJM) last Friday started installing the first pair of giant steel beams for the Pasig-Potrero Bridge in Pampanga as part of the full blast SCTEx construction to meet its end-2007 deadline.

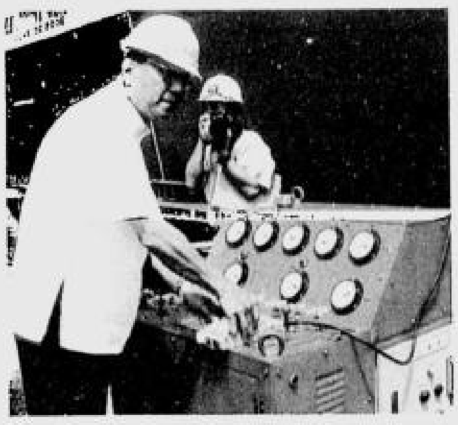
KOJM project manager Masato Otsubo said at 720 meters, the Pasig-Potrero Bridge is the longest span in the SCTEx Subic-Clark section. The first pair of girders installed last Friday measured 50 meters long and three meters high each, with a combined weight of 120 tons.

First time

To put the massive girders in place, the engineers used the modern launching method which employed hydraulic jacks to lift the steel beams to the support columns from launching rails that are Teflon-plated, the first time such bridge technology is used in the Philippines.

"The SCTEx project is a big boost to the country's investment and economic infrastructure, and we are making sure that everything about the SCTEx conforms to international standards," said BCDA president and CEO Narciso Abaya during the ceremonial switch on for the steel girder laying.

Financed by a yen loan package from Japan, the SCTEx will connect the Subic Bay Freeport Zone in Zambales to the Clark Special Economic Zone in Pampanga, then on to the Luisita Industrial Park in Tarlac. Once the SCTEx is finished, estimated travel time from Subic to Tarlac will be less than an hour.



BCDA president and CEO Narciso Abaya presses the start button of the hydraulic jack used to install the first gigantic pair of steel beams to the columns of the Pasig-Potrero Bridge being constructed in Pampanga.

Flagship project

The SCTEx is a flagship project of President Macapagal Arroyo to create a dynamic economic corridor in Central Luzon and the BCDA is the lead implementing agency. Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd. of Japan is in charge of fabricating and installing the steel girders of the bridge.

The KOJM joint venture is the main contractor for SCTEx Package I (Subic-Clark Section). The Hazama-Tasei-Nippon Steel (HTN) joint venture, on the other hand, is the main contractor for SCTEx Package II (Clark-Tarlac section).

The landmark construction event was also witnessed by Second Secretary for Economic Affairs Koichi Sakai of the Embassy of Japan and local officials from Central Luzon.

The art of Bisazza

IN THIS DAY AND AGE WHEN competition is fierce, one has to continuously innovate to attract people's attention, and eventually get a big slice of the consumer market. Mediocre brands and the usual product offerings certainly do not work anymore.

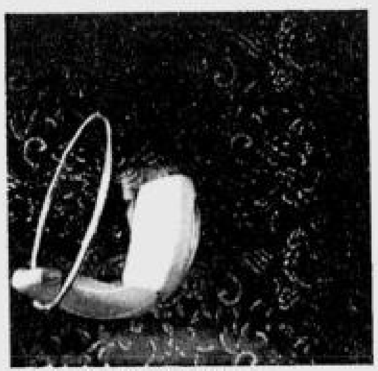
Companies should know that consumers have become smart in their choices and often demand an extensive range of revolutionary products that fulfill their promise to enhance physical beauty, provide better health, or make people's lives more comfortable and convenient in general.

Welcome event

This made the Philippine launch of Bisazza (pronounced as bi-sa-cha) such a welcome event in the country. Considered to be the world's leading producer of glass mosaic products, Bisazza is dubbed as the Rolls Royce of glass mosaic tiles.

One article in a foreign publication describes it best: "Bisazza is like Chanel. A *maison de couture*. It's a whole new world, not just fashion. It is daring and perfectionist, elegant without excess. It's like Coco Chanel herself. She always said that 'fashion passes, style remains.' And Bisazza has invented a style with its own materials. Not through dresses, but through glass mosaics. Like Chanel's apparel, which changed how women were seen and how they saw themselves, Bisazza has changed our attitude toward mosaics."

During the Philippine launch held recently, Bisazza's general manager Ric Vincent Atienza emphasized on the credibility of the company which was started in Alte, Vicenza, Italy in 1956 by Renato Bisazza with the serial production of vetricolor. In 2004, Bisazza became widely recognized as a global luxury brand and joined the ranks of the elite Altagamma (composed of a very few hand-picked Italian companies known for their high-quality products of international prestige and expression of the Italian style and culture throughout the world).

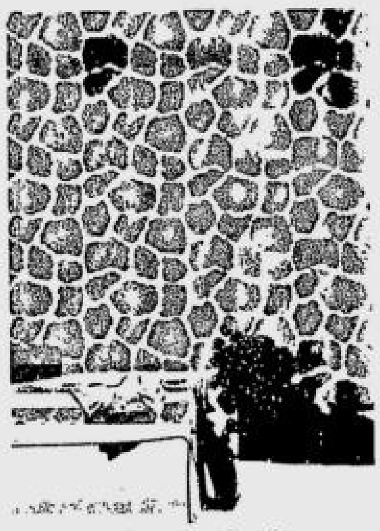


FINE Chines silk in mosaic

Today, it boasts of a thousand employees, five single-brand flagship showrooms (in Milan, Berlin, Moscow, New York and London) and four production centers. It also has 13 branch offices (in France, Germany, Great Britain, Spain, Russia, Netherlands, Belgium, the United States, Australia, China, Hong Kong, India and the Philippines) and a network of over 7,000 distributors.

Finest glass mosaics

In the realm of Italian glass mosaic art, Bisazza has distinguished itself globally not only for producing the finest glass mosaics, but also for pioneering inventive and revolutionary applications for this ancient art form in the 21st century.



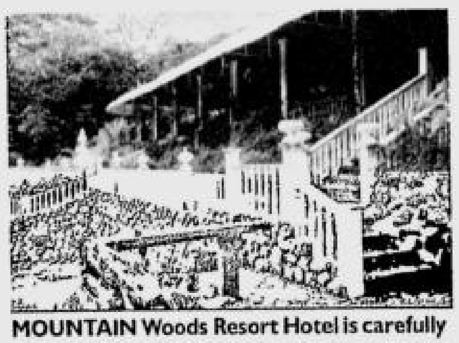
ANIMAL prints appeal to the senses.

Ric Vincent G. Atienza welcomed over 300 of the country's most respected architects, interior designers, decorators, real estate developers, contractors and other guests who have simply fallen in love with the beauty of Bisazza.

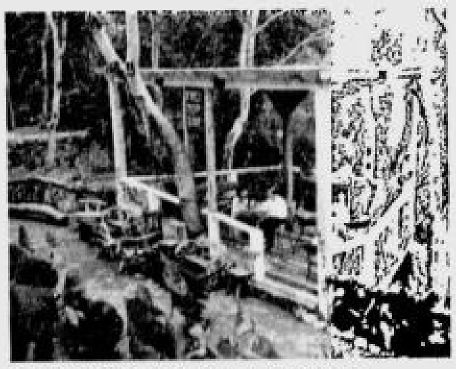
Also present during the launch were beauty, wellness and lifestyle queen Cory Quirino, who shared with guests some insights on enhancing one's creativity, while Cherry Lou wowed the guests with her power-packed performance. Lucky visitors also took home Luxor/Patrae Bisazza slabs and almost everyone took advantage of the huge discounts given on selected Bisazza products.

Bisazza, is, indeed, setting a new code of elegance for the contemporary Filipino home and will soon become the by-word in the walls and floor decorations market in the Philippines.

Bisazza glass tiles are distributed in leading home depots and tile dealers nationwide.



MOUNTAIN Woods Resort Hotel is carefully integrated into its natural environs.



THE TREE-TOP Bar is a picturesque watering hole.

Mountain Woods: the ideal year-round retreat

HIGH ACCESSIBILITY IS ONE OF THE major reasons Mountain Woods at Subic has become the weekend idyllic escape of choice by those seeking well-deserved breaks from the hustle and bustle of city life.

Now only less than two hours drive from the Balintawak Tollgate, Mountain Woods Resort Hotel, a refreshing mountain resort located at Kalayaan Heights, Subic Bay Freeport Zone, offers a sanctuary where one can rejuvenate and recharge from the stress of daily life, while offering the ideal venue for precious bonding moments with family and friends.

Forest, sea views

Here, guests will be welcomed by astounding forest and sea views overlooking serene Subic Bay. Perched on a cliff and surrounded by lush foliage where various indigenous fauna thrive, Mountain Woods offers a unique chance for guests to commune with nature, which affords them the peace and privacy they well deserve.

The resort's structures are also carefully integrated into the natural environment, so that guests will feel at one with nature as they go about the facility. Guests can wake up in the morning to the delightful chirping of birds that abound in the area. There are 28 international grade rooms with amenities for the conveniences of urban living: cable TV, refrigerator with a mini bar and a toilet and bath with hot and cold shower, complimentary coffee and tea.

AIR-CONDITIONED private dining is now available at the cozy and intimate Le Jardin extension.

While away time

There are several activities to while away time when at the resort, including fun times at the eternity pool and a kiddie pool which provides guests an awesome view of Subic Bay that extends into the mountains of Subic. Accommodations include free use of recreational facilities such as billiards and ping-pong so that kids and the young at heart can play to their hearts' content.

Excellent food and service can be expected at Le Jardin, the flagship dining outlet which boasts of an experienced and well-versed culinary team for discriminating guests, fresh green salad grown in the resort and a unique al-fresco ambience. Air-conditioned private dining is now available with the opening of the Le Jardin extension. A versatile pianist playing classical music among other things completes the whole dining experience with friends and loved ones.

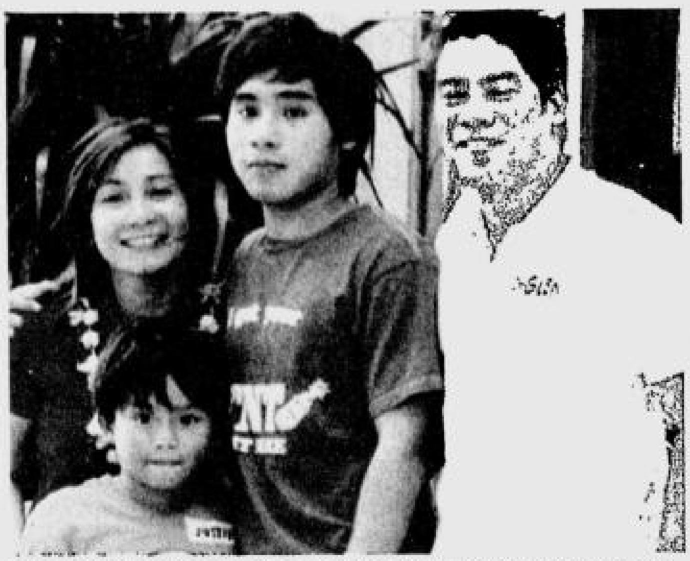
There are several nooks and corners around the resort where guests will feel more intimate. A Gazebo has been set up for meditation, picnic and dining, or for those seeking some exclusivity. A picturesque Tree-top bar also serves as a watering hole where guests can unwind during the day and at night.

Spa services

A total retreat involves the ultimate in pampering and relaxation, which is why the resort offers quality spa services coming from the Wellness Center of White Rock, Mountain Woods' sister resort. Guests can avail of signature massage and body treatments enjoyed more in this serene mountain escape.

All these offerings, visitors will much more appreciate because a stay in Mountain Woods is unexpectedly very affordable based on current promo rates. An additional 20 percent discount is given for weekday "overnighters." There's even a 50 and 25 percent discount, respectively, from already very reasonable prices during happy hour (4-6 p.m.) on food and drinks. Group rates, and seminar conferences at very competitive prices are available. There are two seminar rooms with capacities ranging from 20 to 150 participants.

From the Customs Gate (Tipo Road), Mountain Woods Resort Hotel's a mere five minutes away turning right after the first traffic light along Argonaut Highway.



THE EVENT proved to be the perfect way for residents to bond with their family and neighbors.

THE BAY Garden community eagerly joined the fun and unique games that lasted until nighttime.

Family festivities by the bay

FULLY COMMITTED TO ITS PROMISE OF providing tight-knit communities, Federal Land recently teamed up with the BG Condominium Corp. to organize the Bay Garden Family Day—a fun-filled event featuring an assortment of activities for the whole family's enjoyment.

Kids and adults alike enjoyed feasting on grilled cuisines and fruity milkshakes while participating in the different games. The kids received different gifts, took turns hitting the multicolored piñatas, and were treated to an educational bird and reptile show. Both the young and young at heart watched in amazement, as unique birds performed impressive tricks and fearless volunteers hurried forward to carry a rare Albino Python around their neck.

Perfect complement

The celebration was a perfect complement to the vacation ambiance of Bay Garden. The tropical resort-style poolside was made even more festive with the bright-colored lanterns and flower-shaped pinwheels that adorned the podium gardens. And with the stunning scenery provided by Manila Bay, it was truly a picture-perfect afternoon.

The BG Family Day also featured a touching tribute to mothers. All the moms present were gathered in front and one resident offered them a poem. The husbands then came forward with their kids, all bearing a long-stemmed rose for the most important woman in their life.

Trademark

Communities that uphold total wellness and foster family values have always been the trademark of property giant, Federal Land Inc. All Federal Land projects are created to provide their clients a sanctuary where one's quality of life is constantly nurtured through a balanced and harmonious environment.

Bay Garden is located inside Metropolitan Park, a 40-hectare master-planned community on Roxas Boulevard. With over 60 percent devoted to open space and lush greenery, Bay Garden is the ideal home for those who desire a peaceful, natural setting while still having the comforts of modern living.

Best-kept secret

Built and designed to cater to one's total well-being, Bay Garden features a wide range of complementary amenities like an indoor heated pool, resort-style swimming pool, landscaped sunbathing deck, children's wading pool and playground, a full-service gym, tennis and basketball courts. Free from the common urban problems of pollution, congestion and sanitation, Bay Garden has often been termed as Manila's best kept secret.

Bay Garden's strategic location provides great accessibility to the progressive cities of Makati, Pasay, Binondo and Malate. It is also conveniently near to essential establishments such as banks, schools, the Blue Wave Strip mall, the newly opened Mall of Asia, and the Le Pavilion event venue—an assurance that there is no need to go far for one's immediate needs.

Bay Garden offers a tranquil lifestyle and a perfect setting for raising a family. Model units are available for viewing on-site at Metropolitan Park, Roxas Boulevard corner Edsa Ext., Pasay City. For further questions about Bay Garden, please call 551-0888, or log on to www.baygarden.com.ph.

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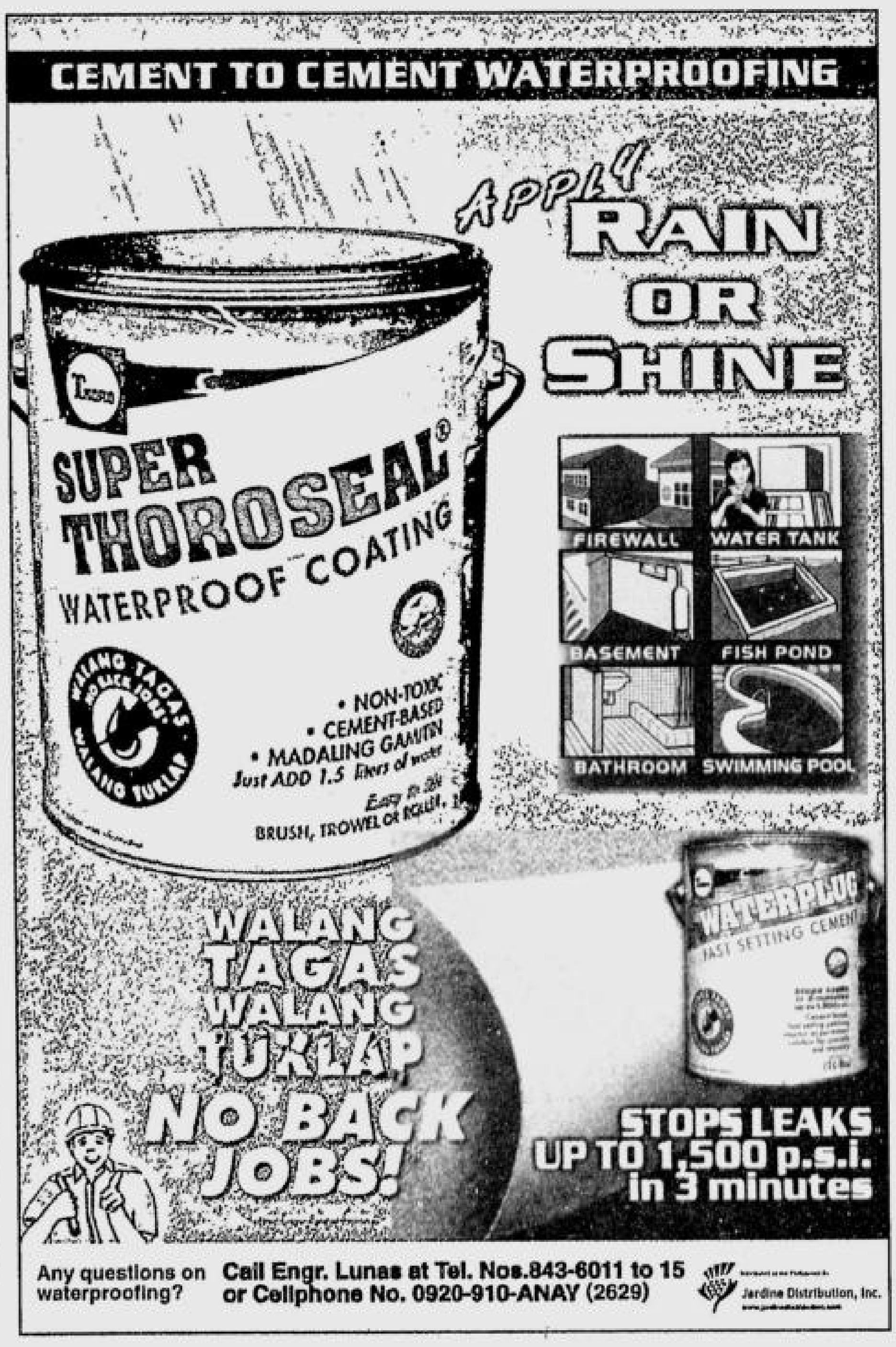

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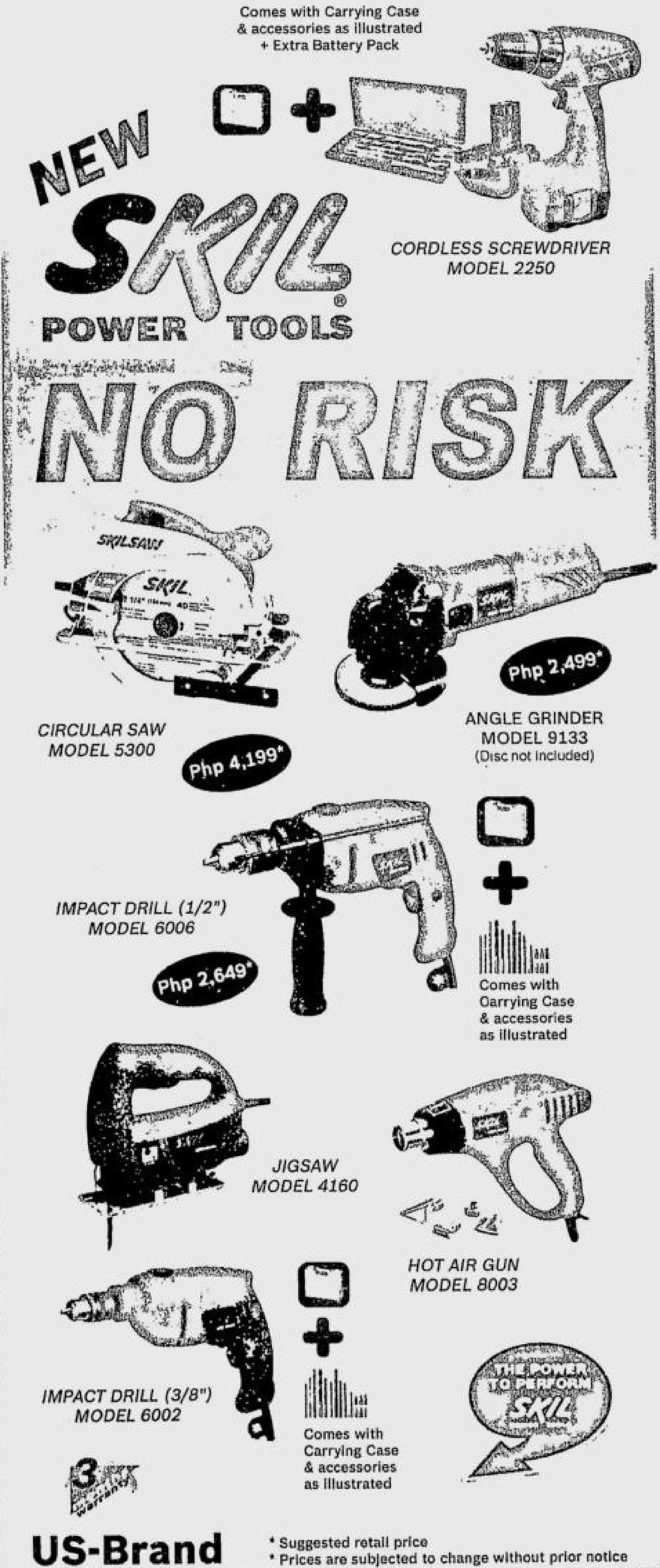

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Why oil prices remain high

PARIS—OIL PRICES, WHICH hit a record high point of $75.40 a barrel in New York Wednesday, more than triple the level four years ago, are nailed to a peak by a combination of geopolitical and technical factors.

These are the main reasons for persistently high prices. While the spike on Wednesday arose from North Korean missile tests, the market is concerned more with Iran, the second-biggest producer within the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec).

Geopolitical concerns

Traders are worried about a long-term disruption of Iranian supplies in the event of international sanctions against Tehran over its nuclear research program, as a result of either a cut in output or a blockage of the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

Added to that is a terrorist factor raised by the persistent threat from al-Qaida in oil producing Gulf states, and longstanding sources of tension such as conflict in Iraq and Nigeria.

Finally, other major producing countries like Venezuela, Chad and Russia are said to be in an "uncomfortable" situation and thus not necessarily able to compensate for potential output shortfalls elsewhere.

Production problems

Oil producers are having difficulty in keeping up with increasing demand.

Most producing countries are pumping at full capacity and only Saudi Arabia has real spare capacity.

Its spare production cushion is considered to be small and is in the form of heavy crude that is difficult to refine.

The lack of leeway in the event of trouble in a major producing country is a major source of concern for many market players.

In general however, production problems in the past few years have been taken to heart by both producer countries, which are slowly increasing investments, and by consumer countries which have rebuilt strategic stocks.

Experts nonetheless believe this factor could maintain tension in oil markets for three or four more years.

Oil analysts and Opec had already underscored the issue, and hurricanes last year in the United States focused attention on weaknesses in the refining sector, which has become a serious bottleneck.

Lack of refineries

No refineries have been built in Europe and the United States for 30 years and existing facilities often require major repairs.

In addition, some refineries cannot handle heavy crude, which is all producers can offer on top of their current output.

A lack of refined products such as gasoline (petrol) and heating or diesel fuels has contributed to higher crude oil prices.

In the United States, this last factor is now aggravated by new environmental standards, by fears of shortages during the summer "driving season" when cars are widely used for vacations, and by the fresh threat of hurricanes to US oil infrastructure.

Almost simultaneous rebounds by economies worldwide in the past three years has led to a surge in oil consumption, particularly in China and the United States.

Economies worldwide are expected to expand by another 5.0 percent in both 2006 and 2007, according to the International Monetary Fund.

The International Energy Agency forecasts global demand will grow by 1.5 percent in 2006 to 84.9 million barrels per day.

Investment funds have diversified their portfolios over the past few months and have favored holdings in raw materials, oil in particular.

Some experts say market speculation amplifies oil price increases but is not the main cause. *AFP*

Crude oil prices dip below $75 on US stock build, inflation risk

Market concerns over supply constraints in Iran, Nigeria linger

TOKYO—OIL FELL BELOW $75 A BARREL on Friday on an unexpected increase in domestic US gasoline supplies, breaking the momentum of a run to record highs earlier this week.

Traders were now waiting for US jobs data later on Friday, concerned that the risk of inflation could affect energy demand.

US crude ticked lower by 30 cents to $74.84 a barrel yesterday afternoon.

It had settled 5 cents down on Thursday, trimming a $6 rally that ran from late-June to a record $75.40 struck on Wednesday. London Brent crude eased 16 cents to $73.92.

Gasoline stocks in the United States, the world largest oil consumer, rose 700,000 barrels last week, US government data showed on Thursday. That was counter to analysts' forecasts for a drop.

"The market had targeted a fresh record high, guessing the US inventory data would show bullish figures, but that was betrayed by a gasoline stock build," said Keith Sano, the manager at commodities business unit at Sumitomo Corp. in Tokyo.

"Most likely, the market will sink as traders will try to lock in profit at the $75 level ahead of the weekend."

The latest auto fuel stock level was still down 3.1 million barrels in year-on-year terms, and traders said strong US demand would give long-term support to the market.

The government data showed US gasoline demand increased 1.4 percent over the four weeks to June 30 from a year earlier.

The number of drivers was forecast to have risen to a record during the July 4th Independence Day holiday.

Support also came from lingering concerns over supplies from key oil exporter Iran amid its nuclear row with the West, and a partial loss of Nigerian oil output.

In eighth-ranked exporter Nigeria, where some oil production has already been lost due to militant attacks, gunmen abducted a Dutch man who was working on an unfinished Shell plant.

Iran, the world's fourth largest exporter, failed to reply on Thursday to major powers' proposals aimed at defusing the dispute over its nuclear programme.

Ali Larijani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, told reporters he would give a preliminary response next week.

Traders said risks of inflation, which could dampen global oil demand, also had to be kept in mind. Strong private sector jobs data on Wednesday led economists to revise up their forecasts for Friday's US job figures.

That in turn boosted speculation that the United States could continue its two-year monetary tightening cycle and lift rates from 5.25 percent next month. *Reuters*

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PEOPLE walk past a large advertising display board in Hong Kong. A record $71 billion was spent on advertisements in the Asia Pacific region in the first three months, with China dominating the market, a report said Tuesday. AFP

Japan raises GDP view, backing rate views

TOKYO—JAPAN'S GOVERNMENT RAISED its projections for annual economic growth on Friday, further cementing expectations that the Bank of Japan will raise interest rates next week for the first time in six years.

The revision could pave the way for the government to declare an end to Japan's long era of deflation, and may make central bank board members more comfortable about raising the key overnight interest rate from the current level of zero.

The Cabinet Office now expects gross domestic product to expand by 2.1 percent in real terms in the fiscal year to next March, up from its current forecast of 1.9 percent, according to a document from the office obtained by Reuters.

Economy Minister Kaoru Yosano told a news conference the government's top economic policy panel would be presented with the upgraded growth forecasts at a meeting on Friday evening.

The Council on Economic and Fiscal Policy is scheduled to weigh a package of medium- and long-term economic policy goals, and will use the new figures in its deliberations.

Finance Minister Sadakazu Tanigaki said at a separate news conference he believed the end of Japan's deflation was in sight.

But Tanigaki, who has opposed a BOJ rate hike, urged the central bank to consider the possible chilling impact of this week's North Korean missile launches on financial markets when it makes its rate decision.

Japan's economy has been recovering solidly on the back of firm capital spending and personal consumption, and looks set to post its longest postwar expansion.

A majority of analysts and traders expect the BOJ to raise the rate by a quarter point at its next policy-setting board meeting on July 13-14.

Consumer prices have been rising since November after more than seven years of decline.

The Cabinet Office now forecasts that nominal GDP will grow 2.2 percent in fiscal 2006/07, an upgrade from the government's current projection of 2.0 percent. Consumer prices are likely to rise 0.6 percent, compared with the current view of 0.5 percent.

The forecast for the GDP deflator was unchanged at plus 0.1 percent, according to the document.

Financial markets have largely priced in a BOJ rate hike next week, and showed little reaction to the upgraded projections.

Separately on Friday, the BOJ said it will toughen rules on financial transactions by its employees and require public disclosure of top officials' personal assets after a scandal involving Governor Toshihiko Fukui's personal investments. *Reuters*

GM chief to fight bid to link with Renault

CARLOS Ghosn, CEO of Nissan and Renault, and investor Kirk Kerkorian have discussed the possibility of Renault and Nissan buying a minority stake in General Motors. AP

DETROIT—JUST AS GENERAL MOTORS Corp. chair and chief executive Rick Wagoner's turnaround plan is starting to take hold, analysts say he now has to fight to keep it going and perhaps save his career.

The battle begins on Friday when GM's board meets via teleconference to discuss a plan from dissident shareholder and billionaire Kirk Kerkorian that would link GM with Renault SA of France and Nissan Motor Co. of Japan.

If Kerkorian, who has been unhappy with the pace of change at GM, can convince some big investors of the plan's merits, Wagoner could be ousted and replaced by Carlos Ghosn, chief executive of both Renault and Nissan who revived Nissan from near death.

Although GM officially says it will study the proposal from Kerkorian's Tracinda Corp. and judge it objectively, industry analysts and dealers who know Wagoner say he probably is building a coalition to fight Kerkorian.

"He's a coach type of guy. He's very much a team player," said David Cole, chair of the Center for Automotive Research in Ann Arbor, of Wagoner. "How he's operated in the past, it's less focused on Rick and more focused on what's right for the company."

What's right for GM, Cole said, is to continue in the direction Wagoner has set, with significant expense cuts and upcoming new products that have potential, including a hybrid large SUV to be unveiled next year that gets up to 9.4 liters per 100 kilometers of gasoline.

Wagoner received a vote of confidence from the board in April. GM officials say it's unlikely that the board would take any action on the Tracinda deal in the Friday meeting.

But Stephen Mader, vice chair of Christian & Timbers, a New York-based executive search firm, said GM needs Ghosn's leadership style and personality more than a team approach led by Wagoner, who has been with GM since 1977.

Kerkorian, Cole said, wants GM to change more quickly, and Ghosn clearly is capable of leading quick change.

But the transition to join three companies with vastly different cultures would take far longer than letting Wagoner's plan work its way out, Cole said.

"You put three companies together, it's not going to happen fast," he said. "The economies that come with combinations really take a long, long time."

GM has suffered from declining profits, high labor costs and growing competition from Asian automakers. *AP*

Asian stock marts up on US Fed pause talk

SINGAPORE—ASIAN STOCKS rose on Friday, taking their cue from Wall Street peers, after surprisingly weak US service industry data fueled speculation of an imminent pause in the Federal Reserve's two-year monetary tightening.

Japan's Nikkei rose 0.7 percent to 15,429.98 by midday, lifted by gains in semiconductor and auto makers and by a 2.8 percent jump in Japan Tobacco Inc. in line with US rivals after the Florida Supreme Court refused to reinstate a $145 billion punitive damages award against cigarette makers.

Australian commodity stocks BHP Billiton Ltd. and Rio Tinto Ltd. rose on the back of a surge in metal and oil prices.

Copper on the London Metal Exchange was steady at around $7,835 a ton after soaring to a one-month high on Thursday.

Analysts predicted more consolidation to beef up profits.

But gains in other sectors were capped by the firm oil prices, hovering near this week's record high of $75.4 per barrel, and ahead of the US non-farm payrolls data.

The jobs data could determine the next course for the Fed after it raised its key rate last week for the 17th time in two years.

The dollar remained pressured against the euro after losing ground on Thursday following hawkish comments from European Central Bank President Jean-Claude Trichet, hinting at a possible rate hike in August.

The dollar traded at $1.2773 per euro, little changed from New York close, but near a one-month low struck on Wednesday. Against the Japanese currency, the dollar was steady at 115.16 yen.

The weak dollar kept spot gold close to a one-month high of $634.75 an ounce hit on Thursday.

Japanese government bonds ticked up across the maturity curve with lead futures rising from six-year lows following gains in US Treasuries after Thursday's service industry data.

The US Institute for Supply Management's non-manufacturing headline index fell to 57 in June, below economists' consensus forecast for 59 and May's reading of 60.1. The employment component fell to its lowest level since January.

The data led investors to lower their expectations of a robust jobs report for June due later in the day.

"If the US job data turns out to be weaker than expected, that would reinforce expectations of a slowdown in the US economy," said Naomi Hasegawa, senior strategist at Mitsubishi UFJ Securities.

The yield on the benchmark 10-year US Treasury was little changed after falling to 5.185 percent on Thursday after the services data.

The yield on the 10-year Japanese government bond fell to 1.960 percent, from 1.975 percent the day before. The yield on the two-year JGB fell to 0.890 percent, from 0.900 percent.

A sales warning from Advanced Micro Devices Inc did not have any impact on Asian chip stocks. South Korea's top chip maker Samsung Electronics rose 1 percent, pushing up the country's benchmark KOSPI by 1.1 percent.

Japan's Advantest Corp. gained 1,7 percent and Tokyo Electron added 2 percent.

MSCI's key index for the top Asian companies outside of Japan rose 0.3 percent. *Reuters*

Revenue officials to soften VAT cap impact on businesses

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE will issue a regulation that will further ease the adverse impact of the 70-percent VAT cap on the income of businesses.

A revenue official said that the BIR continues to receive complaints from businesses against the imposition of the VAT cap, as well as suggestions on how to liberalize the interpretation of the VAT Reform Law.

"The cap is really unfriendly to business," the revenue official said. "But the problem is that they (business owners) did not lobby enough against it when the VAT bill was still being deliberated in Congress."

According to the official, the BIR is now seeking ways to further temper the impact of the VAT cap on the revenues of businesses. A revenue regulation that will serve this purpose is already in the works, the official said.

Under the 70-percent VAT cap provision of the VAT law, the maximum amount of input value-added tax credits that any business may claim in a given tax period is only equivalent to 70 percent of its output VAT.

The input VAT is the amount of value-added tax shouldered by a firm every time it purchases goods or products that already include the 12-percent VAT in the price. Output VAT is the gross VAT liability of a firm computed as 12 percent of its gross sales.

The business community, led by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, has strongly opposed the imposition of a limit on the amount of input VAT credits that any taxpayer may claim. The group said this provision of the VAT law was unjust, given that the government should give businesses what is due them.

The imposition of the VAT cap was meant to plug revenue losses resulting from the abuse of the credit system.

Congress particularly was persuaded to adopt the capping system after it was reported that some companies from the telecommunications sector had claimed input VAT credits that were higher than their output VAT. Due to the huge amounts of input VAT credit claims, government was forced to give refunds to some firms instead of collecting VAT from them.

But even officials from the Department of Finance have admitted that the 70-percent VAT cap has been taking its toll even on honest taxpayers.

IT, BPO firms set to tap rich European markets

RP mission tailor fits strategy according to EU requirements

By Ronnel W. Domingo

LOCAL FIRMS ENGAGED IN INFORMATION technology and business process outsourcing are embarking on a precision campaign to tap Western Europe's fast growing markets, which makes up a fifth of the global market that is projected to reach $310 billion in revenue over the next three years.

Trade Assistant Secretary Fe Agoncillo-Reyes said that the government is helping companies in sending a mission to the region. The mission will include a business forum, business meetings with potential clients, and high-level networking reception.

"The Philippines will adopt a country-by-country strategy that will fit the service requirements of each (market)," said Reyes, who is also executive director of the trade department's Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions.

Citing data from PriceWaterhouseCoopers, Reyes said that the United Kingdom is still Europe's dominant market. But she added that outsourcing is gaining ground in Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and France.

"The continuing pressure on time to market and cost bases are driving European companies to look at offshore outsourcing as a strategic alternative," Reyes said.

She said financial services sector is the largest consumer of BPO and IT-enabled services in Europe, followed by utilities and telecommunications, while human resources, finance and accounting were also showing notable growth.

"The trade mission is part of our ongoing promotion of the Philippine ICT capabilities to the European market," Reyes said.

The business mission also aims to strengthen ties with the Philippines' counterpart organizations, such as the London Chamber of Commerce, National Outsourcing Association, International Association of Outsourcing Professionals in the UK; FENIT, The Agency for International Business and Cooperation (EVD), and CBI in Netherlands.

Reyes said the Philippines consistently ranks among the top attractive offshore location by various research firms, such as AT Kearney, Gartner, and META.

Also, the country is now the outsourcing location of some Dutch companies like Getronics, ING Group, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, and ABN-Amro.

British companies like Standard Chartered Bank, Sykes and Ambergis Solutions have established outsourcing operations in the Philippines.

SEC exceeds income target for first half

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE Commission (SEC) said it had exceeded its target income for the first six months, fetching about P386.4 million largely from filing fees, a report from the regulator's financial department showed.

SEC's target for the six months from January to June was P268 million.

The total income includes "retention income" of P50 million which, under the Securities Regulation Code, is part of the corporate watchdog's earnings that it can keep and utilize over its annual budget for operations.

Excluding retention income, total income stood at P336.4 million for the first half.

The largest contributor to income was registration and filing fees, which reached P299.8 million.

Fines and penalties amounted to P40.3 million, while license fees from brokers, dealers and salesmen hit P18.3 million. Miscellaneous income was P27.9 million.

The SEC was established in October 1936 by virtue of Commonwealth Act No. 83 or the Securities Act.

Operations began in November 1936. Its major functions included registration of securities, analysis of registered security, evaluation of the financial condition and operations of applicants for security issue, screening of applications for broker's or dealer's license, and supervision of stock and bond brokers, as well as the stock exchanges.

The agency was abolished during the Japanese occupation and was replaced with the Philippine Executive Commission.

It was reactivated in 1947 with the restoration of the Commonwealth Government.

Due to the changes in the business environment under former President Ferdinand Marcos, the agency was reorganized in September 1975 as a collegial body with three commissioners and was given quasi-judicial powers under a presidential decree.

In 1981, the commission was expanded to include two more commissioners and two departments, one for prosecution and enforcement and the other for supervision and monitoring.

In 2000, the SEC was reorganized as mandated by Republic Act No. 8799 also known as the Securities Regulation Code.

Oil firms begin gathering seismic data off Palawan

By Abigail L. Ho

SHELL PHILIPPINES EXPLORATION BV (Spex), Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Co. (Onshore) BV and South China Resources Inc. will start gathering 2D and 3D seismic data in the area covered by Service Contract 60, for which the firms have committed to invest at least $24 million over the next seven years.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said that during a recent meeting with Spex officials, including some representatives from Royal Dutch Shell Plc, they said that they would proceed with the seismic work offshore Northeast Palawan.

Spex general manager for external affairs Facundo Roco said seismic work in the area would start this month.

The work entails an investment of between $3 million and $5 million.

"By the third or fourth quarter of next year, we will be able to tell if there are oil and gas reserves in SC 60," Roco said.

Spex and its partners inked SC 60 with the Department of Energy just last January.

SC 60, which covers a relatively unexplored area of about 1,008,000 hectares, was formerly Geophysical Survey and Exploration Contract 99 or GSEC-99.

According to the DOE, it is one of the promising sites for petroleum exploration, as identified by the Philippine Petroleum Resource Assessment Project Study jointly conducted by the DOE and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation.

Under the contract, the consortium will conduct exploration work in the area over a seven-year period.

Gov't curbs non-essential borrowing

THE GOVERNMENT INTENDS TO impose a moratorium on undertaking so-called "non-essential borrowings" as it pursues efforts to trim down its close to $4 trillion worth of debts.

"Non-essential borrowings" are loans offered by creditors to the Philippine government. These usually come in the form of official development assistance (ODA) that require borrowers to purchase goods and services needed for the ODA-funded projects from the country acting as the source of credit.

The proposal to do away with non-essential borrowings was part of the agenda of the Cabinet during its recent meeting in Malacañang.

According to the Department of Finance, limiting the government's borrowings to cover projects and programs that are included in its development agenda for a year was a prudent way to instill fiscal discipline and keep the debts from further growing.

In the past, there were a lot of "tied" ODA offers from various rich countries which the Philippine government accepted.

It was considered "tied" because it accompanied an agreement between the creditor and the government that supplies needed for the ODA-funded projects should be sourced from the creditor-country.

Having succumbed to non-essential borrowings, the government was forced to conduct a major cleanup of its ODA portfolio in 2004 and 2005.

During the cleanup, the government had to cancel ODA projects that had already been approved.

Last year, the National Economic and Development Authority worked on the cancellation of several projects approved for financing by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), the Philippines' biggest source of ODA.

The projects included several infrastructure-related ones supposed to be undertaken by the Department of Public Works and Highways, and by the Department of Transportation and Communications, among others.

The borrowing problem was traced to the tendency of some government agencies to accept ODA offers from creditors even without an assurance that they would get sufficient funding from the national government.

To prevent such problems from recurring, government agencies are now required to first secure a clearance—in the form of forward obligation authority (FOA)—from the Department of Budget and Management before they can accept ODA offers.

As of 2004, the national government's outstanding debt to JBIC alone already stood at P475 billion.

But fiscal authorities said that the government has already been cautious in approving ODA-funded projects and programs as it embarked on a fiscal reform agenda since 2004.

The government's debts stood at P3.962 trillion as of end-March this year.

The debts are composed of ODAs as well as commercial borrowings.

The debt figure continues to grow because of the government's budget deficits, which forces it to conduct more borrowings.

But fiscal authorities said that once the government hits the target of zero deficit by 2008 and a budget surplus by 2009, then the debts would start to decline.

The government's budget deficit for 2005 stood at P146.8 billion. The Arroyo administration hopes to reduce it to only P125 billion this year.

Michelle V. Remo

HOME GUARANTY CORPORATION

IMPLEMENTING GUIDELINES FOR SPECIAL REPAYMENT PROGRAM

(As approved by HGC Board of Directors under Board Resolution No. 03-2006
dated February 20, 2006)

Cognizant of the economic difficulties presently encountered by buyers of HGC housing properties, the Board of Directors of the Home Guaranty Corporation (HGC), in its regular meeting held on February 20, 2006, approved the Special Repayment Program (SRP).[1] The following rules and regulations are hereby promulgated/issued for the guidance of all concerned.

I. COVERAGE

1.1 All buyers or successors-in-interest (BOSII) of HGC housing properties, except those under an account whose Certificate of Sale is already registered or is under redemption period or with a second alias writ issued.

II. CONDITIONS

1.1 A BOSII who already availed himself/herself of the Interest Repricing and Term Extension Program may avail himself/herself of this Special Repayment Program provided that all benefits from the Interest Repricing and Term Extension shall be waived.

1.2 The BOSII who assumed the loan must be willing to execute loan restructuring documents with HGC.

III. COMPUTATION OF TOTAL OUTSTANDING OBLIGATION AND RESTRUCTURED LOAN

1.1 The Total Outstanding Obligation as of application date shall be composed of the following:

- a. Outstanding Principal Loan Balance
- b. Unpaid Penalties (net of condoned penalties, if any)
- c. Unpaid Interests
- d. Unpaid Insurances
- e. Other Unpaid HGC advances
- f. Foreclosure expenses, if any

1.2 The restructured loan under the Special Repayment Program shall be composed of two parts, namely:

1.2.1 Net Interest-bearing portion: equivalent to 130% of the original loan amount, net of the downpayment.

1.2.2 Non-Interest bearing portion: the total outstanding obligation less condoned penalty, if any, minus the Interest-bearing portion referred to in 1.2.1, unpaid insurance fees and other advances. Interest-bearing portion is defined as Net interest-bearing portion plus downpayment.[2]

IV. DOWNPAYMENT

To assure that the BOSII shall have a stake in the restructuring process, he/she shall pay a minimum downpayment equivalent to at least ten percent (10%) of the interest bearing portion of the restructured loan plus unpaid insurance premiums, taxes and legal expenses, if any.

The downpayment may be amortized over the first two (2) years without interest. The unpaid MRI, fire insurance premiums and realty taxes advanced by the Corporation shall be amortized over the revised repayment term without interest. All foreclosure and litigation expenses, if any, shall be paid in full upon approval of the application.

In addition to the required downpayment, the BOSII shall pay the processing fee equivalent to 1% of the total restructured loan or P1,000.00 whichever is lower.

V. CONDONABLE PENALTIES

If the BOSII is eligible to avail himself/herself of the benefits under RA-8501 of March 8, 1998, the penalties due on the loan shall be condoned under the guidelines implementing the said Housing Loan and Condonation Act of 1998. In case the BOSII already availed himself/herself of any of the Penalty Condonation Programs of the Corporation, the said BOSII may still be eligible for this program but without the benefit of penalty condonation anymore.

VI. TERMS OF THE RESTRUCTURED LOAN

1.1 The restructured interest-bearing portion shall have a maximum repayment period of fifteen (15) years or the remaining term of the original loan, whichever is longer, bearing the original interest rate plus applicable insurance premiums for Mortgage Redemption Insurance (MRI and Fire Insurance.

1.2 The non-interest bearing portion shall be amortized in equal monthly payments after the lapse or full settlement of the interest bearing portion for a maximum period of 5 years, provided the monthly scheduled payment shall not be less than the monthly amortization of the interest bearing portion.

However, should the buyer reach 65 years old before the end of the term of the restructured loan, the BOSII may assign a co-borrower up to the first degree of consanguinity with age not more than sixty five (65) years old at the end of the term.

VII. INSURANCES

The BOSII shall be required to obtain insurance coverage for:

1.1 Mortgage Redemption Insurance (MRI) – BOSII shall be covered by MRI based on the total restructured loan upon approval of the HDMF YRT Insurance Pool or other insurers as may be designated by HGC. The Billing and Collection Division shall effect the necessary adjustments. They shall fill in and submit a Medical Questionnaire to be provided by HGC.

1.2 Fire and Allied Perils Insurance (FAPI) – the existing coverage on the mortgage property shall remain the same, unless the BOSII opts to increase it. In such a case, the BOSII may secure additional FAPI coverage from other insurers aside from GSIS, the insurer of HGC.

1.3 Premium Payments – the premium due on MRI and FAPI may be paid annually or may be incorporated in the monthly amortization of the total restructured loan.

1.4 The cost of the documentary stamps for the MRI coverage shall be borne by the BOSII.

VIII. START OF NEW MONTHLY AMORTIZATIONS

The start of the new monthly amortizations as contained in the Promissory Note (PN) shall coincide with the next billing date of the original loan after the loan has been restructured.

IX. OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. Loan payment

   1.1 Monthly amortizations on the loan may be paid over the counter, through Land Bank – Commonwealth for New Capitol Estates and Sikatuna BLISS accounts - (if updated) or through any other collection system which HGC may adopt in the future.

   1.2 The monthly amortization shall be applied according to the following order of priorities: MRI and Fire Insurance, Penalties/Surcharges, Delinquent Interest, Interest and Principal.

   1.3 If due date falls on a non-working day, the monthly amortization shall be due on the first working day after due date.

2. Delayed Payment

   Any delayed payment of the monthly amortization of the restructured loan shall be subject to penalty at the rate consistent with the provisions of the existing Contract to Sell or any other similar agreements.

3. Default

   An account shall be considered in default if the unpaid amortizations of the restructured loan (interest bearing portion and/or non interest bearing portion) is equivalent to three (3) months or more. In such cases, the account shall be immediately referred to the HGC Legal Group or authorized collection agent for immediate institution of foreclosure proceedings or other legal remedies without further need of written demand or notice of default.

X. AVAILMENT PROCEDURE

1. The buyer shall fill out the Application for Special Repayment Program provided by Home Guaranty Corporation, Billing and Collection Division.
2. The revised monthly amortization will be billed on the subsequent month

XI. LIMITATION IN AVAILMENT

This Special Repayment Program may be availed of only once during the repayment term of the loan.

(SGD.) GONZALO BENJAMIN A. BONGOLAN
President

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[1] HGC housing properties refer to any of the following:
- house and lot
- lot only
- leasehold rights on housing units

[2] To recap: Interest bearing portion = 130% of original loan
Net interest-bearing portion = Interest bearing portion minus downpayment

(PDI—July 8, 2006)

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR IMMEDIATE HIRING

SALES ENGINEER (2)

- Industrial or Mechanical Engineer Graduate
- Single, 27 -38 yrs old; w/ experience in feedmilling and technical process; willing to travel
- Good communication / negotiation skills, hardworking
- Proactive, analytical, & computer literate

Interested applicants must bring their Transcript of Records, comprehensive resumé with 2x2 picture at:

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Unit 174 17/F The Columbia Tower,
Ortigas Avenue, Mandaluyong City
Email add:
recruitment_sil@yahoo.com.ph
Pls. look for Ms. Cora

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- Male, not more than 30 yrs old

MAINTENANCE ENGINEER

- 2-3 yrs experience in equipment installation & maintenance
- Male, Mechanical or Engineering graduate

CREATIVE MEDIA PLANNER

- Creative, ability to sequence various videos professionally
- Female, Mass Communication or Advertising graduate
- Good command of verbal & written English
- Fresh Graduates may apply

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES

- Male/Female, 1-2 yrs experience
- Marketing, Mass Communication, Advertising graduate or related course

Submit your resume w/ 2x2 photo, Transcript of Records, Employment Certificates & NBI Clearance

Unit 174 - 17/F Columbia Tower,
Ortigas Ave., Mandaluyong City
Email: recruitment_sil@yahoo.com.ph
Pls. look for Ms. Cora

NOTICE OF PUBLICATION

In compliance with Section 5 of Republic Act 9046, a Notice is hereby served to the public that **PAULETTE L. GOLEZ** has filed with this Office a Petition For Change of First Name from **PAULITA** to **PAULETTE** in the Certificate of Live Birth of **PAULITA DIAZ LLORICO** bearing Registry No. 2219 (k-70) who was born on NOVEMBER 21, 1970 at SAMPALOC, MANILA, PHILS. and whose parents are VICENTE ALBANA LLORICO and AMPARO DACUTAN DIAZ.

Any person adversely affected by the said petition may file his/her written opposition at this office not later than ________

(Sgd.) TERESITA U. JACOMILLE
CITY CIVIL REGISTRAR

(PDI - July 8 & 15, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
City of Olongapo
- oOo -
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
General Services Office, 2/F City Hall Complex
Tel. / Fax No. 047-222-2699
Web: www.olongapocity.gov.ph
Email: Olongapo@pldt.net

26 June 2006

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The City Government of Olongapo, through the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites suppliers/ manufacturers / distributors / contractors to apply for the eligibility and to bid for the hereunder projects:

		Qty/No. of Items	Approved Budget
A.	Procurement of Various Hospital Equipment		
	1. Laparoscopic TV Camera and Video System	1	P 990,000.00
	2. Electrocautery Machine w/ Monopolar and Bipolar Modes	2	1,000,000.00
	3. Choledochofiberscope	1	1,250,000.00
	4. Electrohydraulic Lithotripsy Machine	1	1,580,000.00
	5. Video Telescope 10mm 30 Degrees (endoeye)	1	1,250,000.00
	6. Resectoscope with Cystoscope	1	970,550.00
	7. Flexible Ureteroscope Set (rigid)	1	426,000.00
	8. UES-40 Electrocautery Machine for TUR in Saline	1	1,200,000.00
	9. Anesthesia Machine	1	2,000,000.00
	10. Trocar and Hand Instrument for Lap	1	875,000.00
	11. Infant Incubator "Isolette"	1	700,000.00
	12. Autoclave Machine	1	6,000,000.00
	13. Operating Table	2	3,000,000.00
	14. EGD Machine	1	1,200,000.00
	15. Dermatone (Pneumatic Type)	1	1,020,000.00
	16. Operating Microscope	1	870,000.00
B.	Procurement of Various Surgical Instruments (one lot)	19	5,882,742.00
C.	Procurement of Various Operating Room Lights (one lot)	4	2,205,000.00
D.	Procurement of CT Scan	1	33,600,000.00
E.	Procurement of Mobile X-Ray Machine	1	2,750,000.00

Contract No. OC – 75 to 94 – JLGMH – 008 to 027 – 06
Location James L. Gordon Memorial Hospital
Source of Funding Development Bank of the Philippines Loan Financing

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check / Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to the Eligibility Statement and Screening Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

COMPLETE SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

DATE	ACTIVITIES	VENUE
June 29 to July 12, 2006	Posted at GEPS Website & Conspicuous Places/ Newspaper of Nationwide Circulation	
July 13 to July 19, 2006	Issuance of Bid Documents upon payment of non-refundable bid from fee as per approved schedule of bid document fees (8.00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.) from the BAC Secretariat	BAC Secretariat 2/F Gen. Services Office, Olongapo City Hall
July 20, 2006	Pre-Bidding Conference at 3:00 p.m.	
August 3, 2006	Opening of Bids at 11:00 a.m.	
Aug. 4 to Aug. 11, 2006	Bid Evaluation and Post Qualification	
Aug. 14, 2006	Notice of Awards	

The BAC reserves the right to accept and reject any bid and to cancel all bids at any time prior to award of contract, waive any defects therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the City Government without thereby incurring any liability whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids and obligation to inform the bidder(s) of the ground(s) for the basis of BAC's action.

(Sgd.) MERLITO J. MAJARUCON
Head, BAC Secretariat

NOTED BY:
(Sgd.) Atty. ANGELITO R. OROZCO
BAC Chairman

(PDI – July 1 & 8, 2006)

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PROCUREMENT SERVICE
Room 508, 5th Floor, Mabini Bldg., DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City
Telefax: 633-93-43
Direct Line: 636-65-43; 636-65-42
Website: http://www.deped.gov.ph
deped_procurementservice@yahoo.com.ph

Call for Submission of Textbooks and Teacher's Manual

The Department of Education is inviting interested publishers to submit copies of camera-ready materials of their textbooks (TXs) and accompanying teacher's manuals (TMs) for Music, Arts, Physical Education and Health (MAPEH) for First to Fourth Year high school intended for use in public high schools under the Secondary Education Development and Improvement Project (SEDIP).

This call does not constitute a pre-bid content evaluation. SEDIP intends to buy the best sets of materials that pass content evaluation with a reasonable price-offer for the royalty fee or copyright authorization fee to print and distribute to all its recipient schools nationwide.

All submitted materials will undergo an evaluation process in four levels:

- Level 1 to test completeness of coverage, organization, and internal consistency;
- Level 2 to check accuracy of facts and information, integrity of concepts, and sequence of learning concepts;
- Level 3 to test the appropriateness of the language and visuals used; and
- Level 4 to ensure correct grammar and syntax

The ratings in the four (4) levels of content evaluation will be added and the three (3) titles with the highest aggregate rating will be considered for ranking. The ranks 1 to 3 titles will be recommended for negotiation for the royalty fee or copyright authorization fee that would allow SEDIP to print and distribute to all its recipient schools nationwide. Negotiation shall also ensure in case there is only one title that qualifies.

Publishers will pay an evaluation fee of forty thousand pesos (P40,000.00) each set of textbook and teacher's manual. The evaluation fees, which will be used to defray expenses for service fees, transportation, and board and lodging of evaluators, may be paid either in cash or manager's check addressed to DepED-IMCS Acct. No. LBP 0672-1027-66. Payments must be made at the DepED Cash Division, 1st Floor, Rizal Building II, DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City.

The MAPEH TXs and TMs should be submitted to the DepED-Procurement Service (PS) at 5th Floor Mabini Building, DepED Complex, Meralco Avenue, Pasig City starting July 31, 2006 but not later than August 4, 2006 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

In order to get a soft copy of the Learning Competencies and the Textbook Call Guidelines bring a blank compact disk to the DepED-IMCS starting July 10, 2006. For more information, please contact Ms. Daisy O. Santos or Ms. Nonie Barraquias at 634-1054 or 631-9294.

For your information and guidance.

(Sgd.) Atty. CAMILO MIGUEL M. MONTESA
Assistant Secretary and BAC Chairperson

(PDI--July 8 & 15, 2006)

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LEADERSHIP TURNOVER
The IAME and Associates Toastmasters Club, headed by its charter president Dr. Reynaldo A. Carpio, CTM, (president of Grand Monaco Estate Developers) had formally turnover the club administration to the incoming president Dr. Nerza A. Rebustes, CTM (division chief of Bureau of Customs-NAIA). Witnessing the turnover ceremony of the symbolic gavel are division head governor Dr. Renato G. Josef, ATM-G (medical services and benefits manager of ON Semiconductor) and VP-Education Dr. Voltaire R. Victoria, CTM (sales and business development manager of MEDICard Philippines), held recently at the International Academy of Management and Economics, Makati City.

NREA meet slated

LEGISLATIVE BILLS proposing amendments to the respective laws which created four government housing agencies to strengthen their capacity to address the country's housing needs are among the highlights of the Mid-Year Business Meeting of the National Real Estate Association, Inc. (NREA), the one-stop trade organization, on July 31, (Mon.), 6 p.m. at Club Filipino in Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila.

Rep. Eduardo C. Zialcita, chair of the Congressional Committee on Housing and Urban Development, and one of the principal authors of the four amendatory bills, will discuss their salient features proposing changes to the charters of the National Housing Authority (NHA), Housing & Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB), Home Guaranty Corp. (HGC) and the National Home Mortgage Finance Corp. (NHMFC), it was announced by engineer Raphael G. Baylon, NREA vice president and the event organizer.

The mid-year assembly will also give recognition to past and present member-officers of the Association, including the first four who received their academic degrees, as "Doctors of Philosophy," namely, architect Nathaniel von Einsiedel; former congressman Dante V. Liban; Rep. Eduardo C. Zialcita; and engineer Reynaldo A. Carpio, Baylon added.

Assisting in the preparations are Andy Mañalac, professor Jun Garing, Marissa del Mar, Gilda Lim, Jesse Rebustillo, Veronica Lim, Yul Malicse, Ferdy Hernandez, Caloy Tumpalan, Jojo Tolentino, Lou Ferrer, Axel Aguirre, Flavio Calma, Henson Ama, Adel de Guzman, Ben Casimiro, Danny Santiago and Malou Doles.

OBITUARIES

Renato M. Mangubat

On Thursday, 06 July 2006. Renato Mangubat of Dasmariñas, Cavite, loving husband, doting father and grandfather, passed away at the age of 70. Rene will be forever remembered by his wife, **Long**, his children and their spouses: **Eileen & Gerro, Mia & Jojit, Ivi, Ronnie, Lala & Chiqui** and his grandchildren, **Kalel, Milky, Denise, Alex, Bea, Joaquin & Juami**. Rene will be sorely missed by his relatives, extended family and dear friends.

Rene's wake will be held at their home in Dasmariñas, Cavite where daily masses will be offered. A burial mass will be celebrated at the Immaculate Conception Parish Church in Dasmariñas at 9 o'clock in the morning of Tuesday, 11 July 2006. His remains will then be put to rest at the Dasmariñas Municipal Cemetery.

Contacts: 046 4163469 .. Eileen 0917 8065941 .. Lala 0917 8424180

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

GLORIA DOMINGO MANALO

who passed away in the Grace of our Lord on June 27, 2006

wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and sincerest appreciation to all those who offered masses and prayers, sent flowers and messages of sympathy and who in countless ways, condoled with and comforted us in our hour of bereavement.

CORAZON PICO GOMEZ

Peacefully joined our Creator on July 6, 2006 at the age of 77.

She is survived by sister-in-law **Lourdes**; brother **Leopoldo**, nephews, nieces and grandchildren.

Her remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz, Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Cremation will be on Sunday, July 9, 2006, 12:30 PM at Paz Crematory.

Our Dearly Beloved

LEONITA BAGALAWIS CAASI

Died in the Grace of our Lord on July 4, 2006 at the age of 85

Her loving children **Joyce & Edgar Esguerra, Melba & Jo Sunga, Amado Caasi**; grandchildren **Cecca, Mikey, CJ, Bryan, Mari, Maye**, nephews, nieces & other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Interment will be on Sunday, July 9, 2006 at the Holy Cross Memorial Park, Novaliches, Quezon City after the 8:00 a.m. funeral Mass.

More Classified Ad:
Home Guaranty on page B4

In loving memory on the 3rd Death Anniversary of

REMEDIOS "Mamsie" JOTA LARA

(May 3, 1927 - July 8, 2003)

Holy Masses will be offered today, July 8, 2006 at:

St. James the Great Parish Church	4:30 p.m.
Our Lady of Grace Parish Church	6:00 p.m.
Hearts of Jesus and Mary Parish..........	6:30 p.m.
San Sebastian Parish Church	7:00 a.m. 6:00 p.m.
Shrine of Our Mother of Perpetual Help.....	6:45 a.m. 9:30 a.m.
Malate Catholic Church	6:00 p.m.

Please remember Mommy Mamsie in your prayers.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring... **INQUIRER OBITUARIES**

WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS and bank-to-bank payments

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT MESSAGE OF THANKS
DEATH ANNIVERSARY REQUIEMS FREE OBIT

Beat the high cost of cure with GSK's Value Health program

MILLIONS OF FILIPINOS ARE AFflicted with common ailments and medical conditions everyday. Now, Filipinos can stop suffering from such health problems and, even from the high cost of medicines.

GlaxoSmithKline, the international research-based pharmaceutical company, offers affordable yet high-quality and reliable medicine under the Value Health program. Essential antibiotics like co-trimoxazole and amoxicillin, cefaclor, erythromycin and cephalexin and other medication for common ailments such as Ambrolex (ambroxol), Zantac75 (ranitidine), Calpol (paracetamol), the leading asthma brand of salbutamol, and rifampicin are made more affordable by as much as 34 percent under the ValueHealth program. Find immediate and affordable relief from frequent ailments such as coughs, hyperacidity, flu, asthma and bacterial infections.

Originally launched in 2004, Value Health is the only program by a multinational pharmaceutical company that offers significant price reduction for some of its original branded medicines. Its products are made available with cost savings of up to 34 percent for patients, placing it among the most competitively priced medicines in the market.

With Value Health, patients get a lot of savings on their budget. No longer will the cost of medicines stop Filipinos from living a full and healthy life. Trusted, original, branded medicine from GlaxoSmithKline is now within reach with the Value Health seal of economy and quality.

Consult a doctor about GSK Value Health.

SIFE CHAMPION

Dr. Ramon Ricardo Roque, Ceso I, Deputy Secretary General of the House of Representatives was recently recognized as Champion of Students in Free Enterprise (Sife) Philippines, an honor given to individuals who made significant contributions towards the realization of Sife's mission of providing college and university students the best opportunity to make a difference and to develop leadership, teamwork and communication skills through learning, practicing and teaching the principles of free enterprise. Dr. Roque was recognized for his exemplary dedication to Sife Philippines and for creating sustainability to the organization as chair of its national board of directors. Sife Philippines president Dr. Robert Galindez, Sife Asia Regional vice president and managing director Dennis Lee and Sife world program director Morgan Clevenger presented the award to Dr. Roque during the 2006 Unilever-Sife Philippines National Exposition held at Bayview Park Hotel. The Sife team from the Mariano Marcos State University won the grand prize in the National Exposition and earned the right to represent the Philippines in the 2006 Sife World Cup to be held this September in Paris, France,

UE CONFERS DR. LU WITH DOCTORATE DEGREE

Commissioner Nenalyn Defensor of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) dons the academic cap on Lu Zhangong (center) upon his conferment of an honorary doctorate degree in the Humanities by the University of the East (UE) in Manila. Secretary of Fujian's Provincial Party Committee and chair of the Fujian Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress, Dr. Lu was in Manila recently to foster closer cultural and economic ties between Fujian and the Philippines. Also present during the conferment rites are (from left): UE president Dr. Ester Garcia; UE honorary chairman Dr. Lucio C. Tan; and UE chair and CEO PO Domingo.

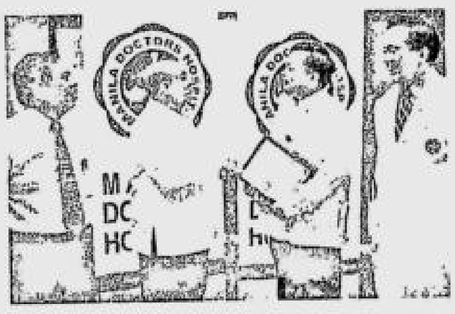
CHILDHOOD TB IN THE PHILIPPINES

Papa, Pediatrica Inc's Defeat Childhood TB Movement and the DOH have all joined forces in putting up a TB diagnosis and treatment program for children to complement the government's current adult TB program. The program has been going on for more than a year now and has since been able to train and produce quality healthcare workers educated on the DOTS. With the efforts of these concerned groups in recognizing and putting focus on this deadly disease, eliminating childhood TB in the Philippines is not too far away. Seen in the picture is Papa president Dr. Jocelyn Franco gracing the end of project presentation in Pampanga.

UNILAB TURNS OVER DONATION FOR LEYTE VICTIMS

United Laboratories Inc (Unilab), the countrys leading pharmaceutical company, recently turned over to ABS-CBN Sagip Kapamilya Foundation the donation of Unilab Employees for the ongoing relief operations for afflicted families in the recent Leyte flashflood. Unilab Employees Council (EC) spearheaded the donations campaign among Unilab employees that gathered assorted clothes, rice, canned goods, and other food items. Ven Agham (extreme left), executive director of Sagip Kapamilya Foundation received the donation from Unilab 33rd Employees Council (EC) chair Atoy Co (extreme right). With them are EC presiding officers Noel Afable and Dale Baes. This initiative is consistent with Unilab's commitment to reach out to victims of national calamities by tapping on its available resources and on employees' spirit volunteerism.

MDH GETS NOD FROM DOT



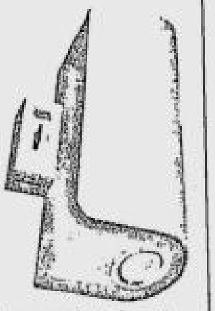
Manila Doctors Hospital (MDH), Manila premiere's healthcare institution was recently accredited by the Department of Tourism (DOT), further enhancing its reputation as one of the top healthcare destinations in Manila. The ISO certified hospital has long enjoyed the patronage of foreigners, as well as balikbayans, who come to seek assistance with regard to health concerns. MDH is an ideal place not only because of its excellent doctors and world class service but also due to the amenities the surrounding area provides. MDH is easily accessible via Roxas Blvd. from the airport. Right beside MDH is a hotel, just one of the thirty hotel establishments, wherein a visitor can stay. Several food establishments, from fast food to fine dining, are within reach. A huge shopping mall, located a block away may provide transients with a place to shop for personal needs or watch a movie. The US Embassy is also located just down UN Avenue. Photo shows, MDH president Aniceto M. Sobrepeña, receiving the plaque from DOT Assistant Secretary Eduardo Jarque, Jr. With them are, from left, Dr. Rex M. Mendoza, OIC and administrative director and Dr. Dante Morales, medical director.

SUPERFERRY EXPANDS DISTRIBUTION NETWORK

SuperFerry recently partnered with fast-moving corporation, JC Spice, to become one of the many household names linked with the multi-level company to serve a targeted market. JC Spice, with its 80,000-strong members nationwide, is now entitled to sell SuperFerry tickets, corroborating the leading shipping company's availability and accessibility. SuperFerry tickets are also available through its over 300 branches nationwide, through E-ticket (www.superferry.com.ph) and through the hotline, 528-7000. Apart from expanding its distribution network, SuperFerry partnered with JC Spice to highlight its biggest travel bargain of the year, the Mega Tipid Trip Promo, which slashes rates up to 50 percent. Shown in photo are, from left: VP for channels Sharryn Joacobson; AVP for Sales and marketing Andrew Deyto; JC Spice president and CEO Joey Castro; business development director Dina Castro and treasurer Julie Rose Defensor.

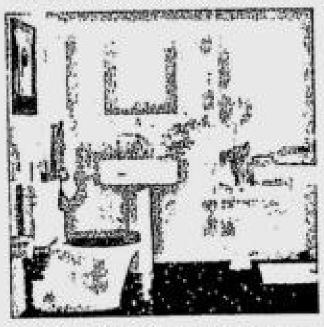
ProductFILES

Edifier i-F330: The perfect iPod speaker



GEAR UP TO A WHOLE NEW AUDIO EXPERIENCE with Edifier i-F330. It's the latest in Edifier's line of high performance speakers meant for portable listening. Certified and specially designed for a wide range of iPod models. The speaker is perfect for 21st century nomads who doesn't want to miss out on amazing audio. The battery compartment, which uses 6 AA batteries, can last for 45 blissful hours. Don't be fooled by the sleek minimalist look as this newbie belts out beautiful highs with rich mid-range and bass. It comes out clear and pure in this foldable entertainment gadget that you can carry anywhere you want. Handling is easy as it comes with a custom-made pouch bag. iPod obsessed individuals who appreciate elegant looks with high quality sound would be happy to know that i-F330 has a built in iPod docking that also recharges the iPod and Has Video Output support for iPod Video. Bundled with Neodyminum driver, Natural Bass technology for enhanced bass, Class D amplifier, and additional 3.5mm stereo input for other audio sources, i-F330 is equipped with all the essentials. The Edifier i-F330 is available at all major dealers. It is locally distributed by Banbros Commercial Inc. For details, call 727-3009 or visit www.banbros.ph.

Toto expands its Nexus Bath Collection



FURTHER INCREASING SELECTION within the graceful Nexus Bath Collection, Toto introduces three new elements - a lavatory available as pedestal or vessel, a lavatory faucet, and a tub faucet. Offering the elemental beauty of deep soaking pools found in secluded natural spas the world over, the Nexus product line appeals to consumers for the loveliness of its natural elliptical design, high performance technology, and installation ease. Today's homeowners are converting their homes to fit their lifestyles, and the bath has become a larger space that serves as a personally customized home retreat where style and harmony are paramount. For today's multi-purposed bath space, the newly expanded Nexus Bath Collection provides the height of beauty, luxury and performance.

Your personalized home recording

Recording Chip
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YOUR PERSONALIZED HOME RECORDING IS just a chip away. With the WOW Recording Chip you can record yourself singing in the comforts of your home. The WOW Recording Chip is an accessory that makes it possible to record on your WOW Mabuhay and WOW Fiesta videoke microphones. With a WOW Mabuhay microphone your recordings can be downloaded into your computer and converted into wave format. With the use of your favorite program you can make audio CDs, or transform the recordings into MP3s. Once you have downloaded your recordings, you can easily erase it from the recording chip, and start recording again. The recording chip is also compatible with the WOW Fiesta microphone, but without the downloading feature. WOW Recording Chip is exclusively distributed by In-A-Jiffy Enterprises/G2K Corp. Available at all branches of Abenson, Odyssey, Astrovision, Automatic Center and other leading appliance, music and video stores nationwide. For more information, call 362-6479, 3619450 and 722-5527 or visit their website at www.wowmagicsing.com.

The best preparation for school

Memory plus
Memory plus

A CHILD'S ABILITY TO ENJOY ALL the benefits of being in school is dependent on his health, both physical and mental. Moms are well advised to look into giving their children the best possible support for their body and mind. A well-balanced and complete diet throughout the day, including a hearty breakfast ensures your child is getting the nutrition his growing body requires. Adequate rest and sleep are important as well. You can also help support his physical and mental growth by giving him supplements containing nutrients found in nature. Memory Plus Syrup is a daily supplement that you can give your active children as they adjust to a new academic year and to new sets of pressures and challenges in school. Memory Plus is natural and kid-friendly, made from four powerful brain tonics Centella asiatica, Bacopa moniera, Lecithin and DHA (Omega 3). Start your child every morning with a dose of Memory Plus and give him the best preparation for school. Memory Plus Syrups are available nationwide in all Mercury Drug and SM Watsons outlets.

French syrup Monin enters RP market

GET HOLD OF THE NEWEST DRINK TO INVADE the Philippine market. Monin, a leading professional syrup maker is finally here with more exquisite flavor that would satisfy your taste buds. Monin flavored syrup is perfect for coffee, desserts, hot and chilled drink, granitas, or gourmet dessert toppings. It will add a different flavor to the usual drink. Monins originated in France in 1912 and has been distributed in over 100 countries. 'Monin is known to be a provider of the finest quality flavored syrups. We procure the very best natural raw ingredients from more than 20 countries, selecting only the premier suppliers. Then we process these ingredients with no additives, no preservatives, nothing that would hide the pure flavor. What you enjoy in each bottle of Monin is the finest syrup available anywhere.' said company president Olivier Monin.

NEW APPOINTEES TO PRB-CB TAKE OATH

Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) Commissioners Renato B. Valdecantos, Avelina A Dela Rea and Chair Leonor Tripon Rosero swear in newly appointed members of the Professional Regulatory Board for Customs Brokers (3rd from left) Ferdinand A. Nague and Silverio F. Montalbo. Also shown is new Chair Constantino Calica, who earlier took his oath of office. They are the first Chair and members of the Professional Regulatory Board for Customs Brokers who have been appointed by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo pursuant to Sec. 5 of RA 9280 otherwise known as the Customs Brokers Act of 2004. The Customs Brokers Licensure Examinations this year are set on Oct. 10, 11 and 12 in Manila and Cebu.

HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL PRESS LAUNCH

HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL PRESS

The Harvard Business School Press boutique located in National Book Store Glorietta Branch in Makati City was formally launched on May 19. National Bookstore joins the prestigious ranks of 45 carefully selected bookstores featuring the Harvard Business School Press Boutique found in countries across Asia, North America and Europe. McGraw-Hill Education Philippines is the exclusive distributor of Harvard Business School Press in Asia. Shown during the launch at the National Book Store, Glorietta branch (from left) Rey Elbo of the Manila Times, National Book Store's general manager and founder - Socorro Ramos, Dante Velasco of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, Trina Alindogan of National Book Store Glorietta, vice president of corporate communications of Manila North Tollways Corp Marlene Ochoa, Stela Suyat of McGraw-Hill, Odessa Gacson of McGraw-Hill and Cai Gualberto of National Book Store.

ANIMALAND'S 'KITTY FOR MOM' WINNERS

Animaland, the do-it-yourself stuffed animal store recently awarded the 'Kitty For Mom' designer kitties to the following winners: Melanie Fadriguela (in left photo with her kids and Milyn Reyes of Animaland) of Twinville Subdivision, Marikina won the JC Buendia-designed Kitty; Jessica Cruz (in right photo with her kids and Rose dela Torre of Animaland) of San Juan, won the Dita Sandico-Ong-designer kitty and Ruth Vera of Eastern Place Salcedo Village Makati won the Frederick Peralta-designer kitty. Animaland has branches in Shangri-La Mall Ortigas, Powerplant Mall Rockwell, Eastwood City Libis, Alabang Towncenter and Toy Kingdom Mall of Asia.

The New York Times names Smirnoff Vodka no. 1

SMIRNOFF HAS SOLIDIFIED ITS position as the world's leading premium vodka, named as the favorite among 21 brands and eclipsing rivals including Ketel One, Grey Goose and Belvedere.

A blind taste test conducted by The New York Times that included a diverse panel of spirits experts characterized the best-selling vodka as "pure, clean and ultra smooth, with pleasing texture and classic vodka aroma." The panel tested vodkas from countries including Poland, the United States, the Netherlands and Estonia.

"We're proud of this recognition as it validates what we've known all along about the smooth, premium quality of Smirnoff," said James Thompson, president of global marketing for Smirnoff. "Consumers worldwide know and trust that crisp, classic taste. It's no surprise Smirnoff is the best-selling premium vodka in the world."

Owned by Diageo, the industry leader in promoting responsible drinking, the Smirnoff brand has a heritage that dates back to the 19th century. Smirnoff described by Eric Asimov of The New York Times as containing "smooth neutrality and pleasing texture," was also recognized with a gold medal in the 2003 San Francisco World Spirits Competition.

Smirnoff has always been known for premium quality vodka. Today, Smirnoff is the world's leading premium vodka brand, with distribution in 130 countries and a number of innovative products, including Smirnoff Ice, the world's leading ready-to-drink alcohol beverage, launched in 1999, and Smirnoff Twist flavored vodkas. For more information about the Smirnoff brand, visit its website, www.smirnoff.com. Celebrating life, every day, everywhere, responsibly.

Tours, Leisure & Chow

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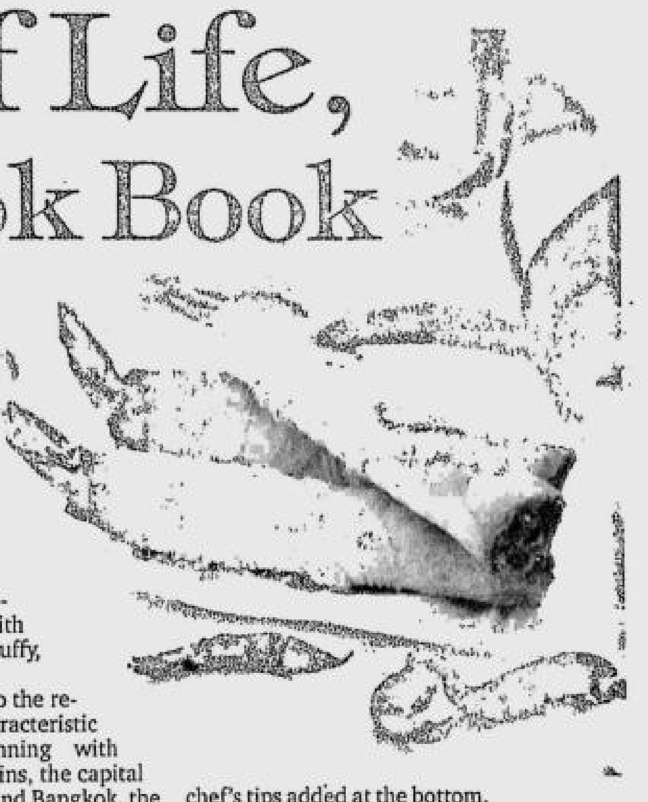
nics Design
Espinosa, Editor

Thai Way of Life, The Dusit Cook Book



"THAI WAY OF LIFE, THE DUSIT COOK Book" is the latest project of the Dusit Group's founder and honorary chairperson, Thanpuying Chanut Piyaoui. This coffeetable book presents popular Thai recipes set out clearly and colorfully in the context of Thai culture. The book is part of the Dusit Group's continuing mission to promote the charm of Thai hospitality to the world.

Thai cuisine is often the first aspect of its culture. And its presence is felt overseas, in the plethora of Thai restaurants that have become popular in so many countries. In the Philippines, it has been notably expressed in Dusit Hotel Nikko's famed Thai restaurant, Benjarong.

Benjarong is the flagship Thai restaurant of the Dusit Group that was introduced in all its properties worldwide. Benjarong, meaning "five colours," is the name of the unique Thai porcelain traditionally used in the Siamese palaces for auspicious festivities and royal occasions. The palaces of the nobility is the repository of the Royal Thai cuisine, where the selection, preparation and serving of food was elevated to a high art. Refinement, skill, inventiveness and adherence to firmly defined rules of taste are the hallmarks of the Royal Thai cuisine and the tradition has been continued at Benjarong.

An appetizing coffeetable book of 152 pages with a refreshing cover- a trio of golden brown, noodle-wrapped prawns, a pale green leaf, a pair of red-bronze dried chillies and a sparkle of gold leaf. The contents follow a clear progression of Thai food culture illustrated significantly by a full-page photograph of a benjarong bowl with its lid removed to reveal fluffy, white grains of rice.

The book then takes you to the regions of Thailand with characteristic recipes from each, beginning with Bangkok and the Central Plains, the capital cities Sukhothai, Ayutthaya and Bangkok, the palace cuisine and the Chinese influence. The recipes, 21 in this section, are illustrated with full page, larger than life photographs of detailed clarity on one page. On the opposite page are clear preparation and serving instructions with the ingredients listed in a box on the left side of the page, and some useful chef's tips added at the bottom.

"The Thai Way of Life, The Dusit Cook Book" is priced at P1,950. The book is available for sale at Benjarong and the Deli Shop, located at the mezzanine level and lobby level respectively of Dusit Hotel Nikko, Ayala Center, Makati City. For inquiries, please call the Hotel at 867-3333.

Where to Stop Where to GO

A weekly directory of the country's best establishments

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Email: makati:citygardenhotels.com

City Travel Hotel
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Tel. (074) 445-0456 / Fax (074) 445-0457

Diamond Hotel Philippines
Cor. Dr. J. Quinto St. Roxas Blvd.
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www.shangri-la.com

Executive Plaza Hotel
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www.hotelveniz.com

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www.laspalmashotel.com.ph

Mandarin Oriental Manila
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Tel. 750-8888
www.mandarinoriental.com

Renaissance Makati City Hotel
Esperanza St. cor. makati Ave., Makati City
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www.marriott.com

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Tel. 888-0505 Fax: 812-7721

Somerset Olympia, Makati
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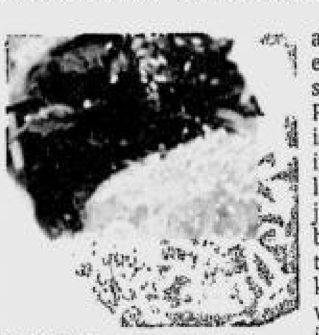
July is 'Heart and Seoul' month at Waterfront



TASTY banchan, kimchi, bulgogi and many more.

KOREAN CUISINE IS THE traditional food of Korea. From the complex Korean royal court cuisine to regional specialties to modern fusion cuisine, the ingredients and preparation are richly varied, and many dishes are becoming internationally popular. Based largely on rice, vegetables, meats and tofu (dubu in Korean), traditional Korean meals are notable for the number of side dishes (banchan) that accompany the ubiquitous steam-cooked short-grain rice, soup, and kimchi (fermented, spicy vegetable banchan, most commonly cabbage, radish or cucumber). Every meal is accompanied by numerous banchan.

Some of these traditional royal cuisines, which can cost as much as US$250 per person excluding drinks, include serving by exclusive waiters and can be found at high-end restaurants in select locations within the city of Seoul. Imperial cuisine has received a recent boost in popularity, due to Dae Jang Geum, a Korean television drama very popular in many parts of Asia, about a humble girl becoming the royal head chef during the Joseon period.

In many aspects Korean cuisine is a combination of Japanese and Chinese techniques in preparing food. If compared to Japanese cuisine, it relies less on fish and seafood; if compared to Chinese, it relies less on oil.

The staple food of course is rice (bap). Rice noodles (chapche) and bean curd (duboo) are common starch substitutes or additions. Korean foods tend to be spicier than either Japanese or Chinese dishes. The hotness comes chiefly from chili. Other common spices are sesame and ginger. Most peculiar about Korean cuisine, however, is its way of pickling instead of cooking vegetables. Pickled vegetables in Korean is kimchi, a term anyone visiting Korean restaurants will learn fast. Literally kimchi is just the word for vegetables; but pickling is so predominant that even for the Koreans, kimchi also means pickled vegetables and they only specify the preparation if it is other than pickled. Koreans are likely to eat pickled vegetables every day of the year, commonly for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. In the cold Korean winter kimchi can last for many months. However, in the tropical Thai climate, kimchi should be and is prepared only several days before consumption. The pickling process takes about 12 to 14 hours. Almost all available vegetables can be pickled but the most common in Korea are cabbage, turnip, and cucumber. The seasoning is chili, garlic, onion, ginger, oyster sauce, fish sauce, and salt. During the fermenting process the vegetables loose much of their natural flavor and instead adopt the flavor of the seasoning. The difference in texture, however, is enhanced.

Taste the unforgettable, many flavors of Korea all Sundays of July in Uno, in 'Heart and Seoul', a special Sunday Lunch and Dinner Buffet, at P750 per person. Uno, located at the Hotel's Lobby Level, is open from 5:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. with a daily breakfast buffet from 5:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., lunch buffet from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and dinner buffet from 6 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. For inquiries and reservations, one may call tel. no. 232-6888 (local 8604 and 8201) or Manila Sales and Reservations office at (02) 687-0888.

Barbi @ The Bellevue Hotel's 20/20

THE BELLEVUE HOTEL, WHERE FOODIES and gourmands meet for hearty meals and sumptuous buffets, now offers its very own Fish N' Chips recipe. Fresh fish and potatoes fried to golden perfection are served with a drizzle of garlic vinegar and tartar sauce, the ideal comfort food for rainy days and cold nights. Available until July 31.

The search for the ultimate videoke singing star ends at The Bellevue Hotel on July 10 for The Bellevue Idol Grand Finals. Monthly winners of the weekly singing contest square off for a chance to win over P100,000 worth of prizes, including a Boracay holiday and a stint as the Bellevue Videoke Nights host. See who reigns supreme! Sponsored by Fairways & Bluewater Resort Golf & Country Club, Perfect Rhythms, Brittany Corporation and Asian Spirit.

Catch one of the hottest musical acts, Barbi Almalbis, live at southern Metro Manila's most happenin' hotspot — The Bellevue Hotel. On July 15, grab the chance to get up close and personal with this shining pop star, sing along to her hits and other favorite tunes. P350 gets you in with one round of standard drink. Entertainment starts at 9 p.m. with seating on a first come first served basis. For inquiries, call 771-8181.

People, Events & Products

The key to successful schools

LILIA VENGCO, FORMER PRINCIPAL of La Salle Greenhills, pioneering principal of De La Salle Canlubang, former member of the De La Salle Zobel board of directors, and PAASCU chair, is one of the speakers at the AHEAD Professional Network's (AHEADPRO) Leadership Strategies for School Managers (LESSM) on July 7 and 8 at La Salle Greenhills lecture hall. Vengco states, "There are teachers who show potential of becoming principals or school administrators, but may either have inadequate knowledge or skills, or may lack reliable leadership qualities that would enable them to successfully lead their respective schools to excellence." What these school administrators need, she said, is leadership training that would guide them in improving student performance, attaining excellent academic achievements, and boosting faculty and staff morale. LESSM aims to enhance the leadership skills of school leaders and managers by making them aware of their leadership behaviors. It is hoped that they can further develop their personal strengths, skills and talents, and use these to achieve their goals. The participants will be taught what leadership strategies they could employ to strengthen confidence and competence. They will be guided to reflect, analyze and appraise their abilities and experiences and to learn from them. Lastly, the participants will be directed to create a Personal Growth Plan that would encourage them to set goals that are specific, attainable and measurable; and that actively envision concrete, short-term and desired outcomes. The other speakers are: Cornelia Soto, Ph.D, former assistant headmaster of Ateneo de Manila Grade School, professor of Ateneo Graduate School and PAASCU chair; and Leticia Penano-Ho, Ed.D., president of the Philippine Association of the Gifted and former dean of the UP College of Education. There are limited slots, and aspiring participants will be accommodated on a first-come, first-served basis. For inquiries, call Saireen Jardiolin at 426-0036 or 0917-8911187, e-mail info@aheadph.com, or visit our web site at www.aheadph.com. LESSM will also be conducted in key cities such as Quezon City, Baguio, Cebu and Davao. LESSM is brought to you by Philippine Daily Inquirer and Radio Partners Inc.: 99.5 RT, 103.5 K-Lite, Magic 89.9, Jam 88.3 and Wave 89.1.

350 ways to enjoy life from Acer

BAM! SUMMER'S JUST ENDED, BUT not with Acer Philippines, Inc. For them, summer is just starting, and it's still scorching hot at this time of the year, with prizes galore that's sure to tickle everybody's brains with delight. Well, at least for the next two months.

Acer Philippines, Inc. introduces its "Win with Acer - Enjoy Life Promo" where every purchase of an Acer notebook computer or desktop gives customers the chance to win exciting prizes.

If you're not excited yet, try this for starters. For the 1st prize, two lucky guys can win round-trip tickets for two to the USA. Well, your guess is right! It's These are round-trip tickets to two of the most exciting places on this planet, the jaw-dropping and awe-inspiring Universal Studios, and to the young and young-at-hearts' number one favorite, Disneyland. These prizes come packed with 4-days, 3-nights hotel accommodation and whole day long fun, adventure, and excitement at Universal Studios and Disneyland.

For the other major prizes, three lucky individuals get to bring home one Acer TravelMate 3022WTMi Pearl White "White Angel" notebooks each for the 2nd prize that he can show off to friends, office mates, and family members. Ten winners, on the other hand, will win Sony Ericsson W550i mobile phones for the 3rd prize, while 15 lucky customers can win Canon Powershot A430 digital cameras and 20 can win 1GB iPod nano MP3 players for the 4th and 5th prizes, respectively.

But don't feel bad if you don't get any of the majors, since 300 other individuals can take home Imation 512MB Swivel Pro Flash Drives!

So how do you get these fun and exhilarating rewards? It's simple. Buy any Acer product, that means either a notebook computer or a desktop that's pre-loaded with genuine Windows operating system from June 1 to July 31, 2006 at any participating Acer reseller nationwide and you get the chance to bag these goodies.

To join, just log on at www.acer.com.ph and fill out the customer information registration page. Each Acer product purchased is equivalent to 1 electronic raffle entry. Raffle draw will be held on August 10, 2006 at the Acer Philippines, Inc. head office, located at Unit 3401, 34th floor, PBCom Tower, Ayala Avenue cor. V.A. Rufino Sts., Makati City.

SCIENCE/HEALTH

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Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

Coping and living with diabetes

By Charles E. Buban

AS A YOUNG MOTHER, Cathy Santillan thought her 7-year-old son's excessive water drinking and lethargy was just part of his growing up. After all, Miguel's regular checkup yielded nothing significant and in fact was advised to just take more vitamins.

"It was only after a friend, who noticed Miguel getting thinner and thinner, told us to have his blood sugar checked that things got clearer. As soon as our family pediatrician received the lab result, we were advised to take Miguel to the nearest hospital. Her diagnosis: diabetes," recalled the former television news anchor.

The diagnosis naturally puzzled Cathy considering no one in her family suffers from diabetes. "Was there something that we have done like giving him too much sweets? Or is there some kind of drug that will cure this and when will this be over?" Cathy reminisced asking their pediatrician.

Lifelong disease

At this point, her doctor told Miguel's type 1 diabetes that he was diagnosed with, will not go away and requires lifelong treatment.

Type 1 diabetes develops when a person's pancreas stops producing enough insulin. Insulin lets blood sugar—also called glucose—enter the body's cells. Without insulin, cells cannot absorb glucose), which they need to produce energy.

Type 1 diabetes is much less common than type 2 diabetes, accounting for 5 percent to 10 percent of all people with diabetes.

Persons with type 1 diabetes are believed to have a genetic susceptibility to developing diabetes. It was believed that exposure to a trigger (viral, environmental, toxin) stimulates the body's immune system to destroy the cells that release insulin (located in the pancreas), eventually eliminating insulin production from the body.

Managable

However, the doctor assured Cathy that even though her son's condition can't be prevented, it can be managed successfully.

"Miguel was diagnosed at the age of 7, and has grown in his ability to manage his diabetes. Now at 15, he is a typical teenager doing the same kinds of things other kids do," she related.

The only "unusual" among Miguel's everyday chores would include occasional monitoring of his glucose level (using a tiny blood glucose monitoring system), giving himself insulin injections, and paying special attention to the amounts of sugars and starches in the food he eats and the timing of his meals.

CATHY Santillan and son Miguel

See a doctor

"I see my doctor once a month regarding my special needs and controlling my diabetes. I also keep a meal plan—low in fat and high in fiber and carbohydrates—or list of foods that I should eat," said Miguel who also bikes and swims to keep himself fit.

While Miguel admits that he still craves for sweets and snacks from time to time, he tries to manage this by taking Glucerna products (from Abott), which are specifically made for people with diabetes as it was clinically shown to help manage glucose levels.

Like any other children with diabetes, Miguel also has to balance the type and timing of the food he eats with the amount of insulin he takes and with his activity level. That's because eating some foods will cause glucose to go up more than others, whereas insulin and exercise will make the glucose levels go down.

"Indeed, having a child with diabetes may seem overwhelming at times, but one should remember that we are not alone. The doctor and the Internet as well as a number of support groups are not only great sources for dealing with glucose control and other medical issues, but also for supporting and helping you and your child cope and live with diabetes," Santillan assured.

Early warning signs

SYMPTOMS OF TYPE 1 DIABETES usually start in childhood or young adulthood, yet parents often miss early warning signs. If you notice any of the following symptoms don't wait until he or she is seriously ill from sudden symptoms of high glucose level. Have your child's blood sugar checked since most regular checkups will not include this test:

- **Urinates frequently**—A child with diabetes needs to urinate more frequently because the kidneys in response to high levels of glucose in the bloodstream, flush out the extra glucose in urine.
- **Is abnormally thirsty**—A child who has diabetes drinks a lot in an attempt to keep the level of body water normal. Also, because of frequent urination, the child loses so much fluids (that causes dehydration) that he or she becomes very thirsty and compensates by drinking more water.
- **Loses weight or fails to gain significant weight gain as the child grows**— In spite of a good appetite, a child who develops type 1 diabetes often loses weight because the body breaks down muscle and stored fat in an attempt to provide fuel to the hungry cells.
- **Lethargic**—Because the body can't use glucose for energy properly, the child often feels sluggish and often feels too tired.

Osteoporosis: the "silent epidemic"

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

MEDICAL FILES

WE'RE ALWAYS WORRIED about all sorts of epidemics, but we seem to overlook one silent epidemic which is slowly incapacitating a lot of Filipinos, particularly post-menopausal women. This problem is osteoporosis, which health experts now label as a public health threat.

Asians are at high risk of osteoporosis compared to their Caucasian counterparts because of relatively lower bone density, inadequate calcium-rich diet as children and an increasingly sedentary lifestyle.

It is estimated that nine million Filipino women are at increased risk of osteoporosis. It is referred to as a "silent epidemic" because afflicted victims present with no symptoms, and the only time patients realize they have a problem is when they suffer a fracture.

Aging is a risk factor for osteoporosis but environmental factors like smoking, excessive drinking of coffee and alcohol, and lack of exercise can also be predisposing factors. According to Dr. Sandra Tankeh-Torres, clinical epidemiology specialist and a past president of the Philippine Rheumatology Association, a personal history of fracture is also a clue that should identify patients with significant osteoporosis.

Main drawback

Because women at risk have no symptoms, the motivation to take medications to neutralize osteoporosis is not that strong, leading to poor compliance. This is the main drawback in preventing osteoporosis-related fractures. Women with osteoporosis do not recognize the seriousness of their condition and they do not appreciate the real benefits that treatment offers. Discontinuing treatment leaves patients at greater risk of fracture and associated disability, reduced independence, and decreased lifespan.

The report on "Adherence Gap: Why Osteoporosis Patients Don't Continue With Treatment," found that 85 percent of doctors had prescribed a bisphosphonate, a popular treatment for osteoporosis, but in 70 percent, patients spontaneously stopped taking their bisphosphonate medication. Reasons for discontinuation of treatment were predominantly related to inconvenience and side effects.

Improved form

Last night (Friday), an improved long-acting form of biphosphonate was launched in the market and hopefully, this will answer the problems which lead to treatment discontinuation. Ibandronic acid, marketed as Bonviva, has been shown in clinical trials to strengthen all the bones in the body by taking just one tablet once a month. I wish there's a similar drug for hypertension, diabetes and other chronic medical problems. This convenient dosing schedule should help high-risk patients to stay on therapy for the required period to improve their bone health.

"The adherence factor (to osteoporosis treatment) is very significant," says Dr. Zaida Gamilla, an obstetrician-gynecologist and professor at the University of Santo Tomas College of Medicine. According to Dr. Gamilla, patients taking bone-protecting medicines like ibandronic acid should be able to sustain their treatment for the required period (one to two years) to be able to maximize the full benefits of the drug.

Taking ibandronic acid has a very high benefit-risk ratio, says Dr. Julie Li-Yu, an officer of the Osteoporosis Society and the Philippine Rheumatic Association. Patients may not see the long-term effect immediately but they will notice that their quality of life has changed for the better, especially those in their golden years.

I'm sure all of us would still want to be active even in our golden years. The sight of a 65 year old saddled on a wheelchair because of a previous fracture represents a medical failure. It's always heartwarming to see senior members of our society dancing gracefully, playing a good round of golf, or still able to do their brisk walk every morning. Maintaining bone health should be a key factor that will help ensure the fond memories of an active life past the menopausal or andropausal ages, and even beyond the golden years.

'In love with Science'

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

WHAT MAKES AN OUTSTANDING young Filipino scientist? Childhood influences, parental support, great teachers, strong faith, personal drive? What about their struggles, and how do they find fulfillment?

For the past two years, Philrice executive director Leo Sebastian and I have collected and edited stories from 22 Outstanding Young Scientists (OYS) who try to answer the above questions. "In Love with Science" (Anvil Publishing) will be launched on Tuesday, July 11, at the first OYS national convention at the Manila Hotel.

Many scientists come from humble beginnings, sometimes marked by tragedy. While botanist Victor Amoroso was at college, his father was gunned down, and he vowed to make his mother proud. Food chemist Ernesto Luis caught polio at one year of age, but he never let this deter him. Applied biochemist Jose Oclarit grew up in a nipa hut and traversed mountains and rivers before reaching school.

Influences

Despite the hardships, the scientists generally have remarkable parents. Botanist Rhodora Aldemita and genecicist Gabriel Romero, siblings who both became OYS, credited their mother for ensuring that the children finish school even after their father died. Animal geneticist Orville Bondoc's situation was reversed-after his mother's death, his father saw to it that all eight children earned a college degree. Forestry engineer Nathaniel Bantayan never forgot his father's dictum that feeding the brain came first, and that the stomach could wait. Medical doctor Patricio Palmes' mother, a nursing aide, borrowed old textbooks from her doctor-friends to supplement her son's learning.

Inspiring teachers are another factor. Chemist Beatrice Guevara was instrumental in the careers of Alicia Aguinaldo and Christina Binag. Marine scientist Gisela Concepcion made it possible for chemist Mary Ann Endoma to continue local research. Chemist Erwin Enriquez cited a litany of grade school teachers, from Misses Honrada and Herrera to Mrs. Ramos and Gallego. Zoologist Glorina Pocsidio was thankful for the care and concern of National Scientists Gregorio and Carmen Velasquez. Another National Scientist, Clare Baltazar, was the dissertation adviser of Cecilia Reyes. In graduate school I had my own mentors, especially Academician Fr. Ben Nebres, SJ and Outstanding social scientist Honey Carandang, to whom I dedicate the book.

Constant challenge

Every scientist faces constant challenge. Social scientist Dindo Campilan had to continuously balance cultural realities with experimental requirements. Molecular biologist Corazon de Ungria had to learn to forge bonds with people from all walks of life. Organizational psychologist Regina Hechanova had raised two young children and start graduate studies at 32 far from home. When geneticist Glenn Gregorio's wife complained about a dangerous tricycle trip in Bangladesh, he replied, "That's where the action is."

Highly motivated, the OYS are passionate about their work, and derive great satisfaction from what they do. Fisheries expert Rafael Guerrero III singled out commitment as a prime ingredient, "putting ourselves fully to the chosen field of endeavor." Plant breeder Leo Sebastian never brooded on experimental failures, but approached them positively. Marine biologist Paciente Cordero Jr. resisted foreign offers because "there is still so much work to be done at home."

The OYS Award was instituted in 1980 to recognize Filipino scientists below 40 years of age, for outstanding contributions in science and technology. The National Academy of Science and Technology is the screening and selection body for this award, with criteria being the quality and number of scientific works and publications; contributions to the advances of science in general and to the Philippines in particular; and contributions to the well-being of our economy and culture.

Leo and I are proud to be in such good company, for the OYS, like the stories themselves, are truly inspiring. Proceeds of this book go to the organization OYS Inc., and a special discount will be given during the launch. We hope that teachers and parents will read these stories to our children; and that our youth will be inspired enough to follow in their footsteps, for despite all the clichés, they remain our country's best hope. For orders, contact Anvil at 637-8840 (ask for Gwenn or Jo).

* * *

E-mail the author at blessbook@yahoo.com.

Pinoy hopes to be first Southeast Asian doc to reach Everest summit

By Tessa R. Salazar

THE FILIPINO DOCTOR WHO STOOD by the sidelines at the Everest base camp while the first Filipino Everest climbers reached the world's highest peak wants to go all the way to the top during the Unity Climb next year.

Dr. Ted Esguerra, the physician who monitored the health of the members of the first Philippine Mount Everest Expedition (FPMEE) team, feels he's more than ready to carry his own weight to the summit. During the team's historic climb, Esguerra had to climb from base camp to rescue a distressed Indonesian climber, a Nepalese government official and a Sherpa.

Rescue doc

A rescue doctor of the Philippine Coast Guard who specializes in Wilderness Emergency Medical Services and aviation medicine, Esguerra runs two km every day lugging an 18-kg backpack.

Esguerra, who now weighs 65 kg, lost four kilos during the Everest stint.

Knowledgeable in the important aspect of wilderness medical services and aviation medicine known as "high-altitude physiology," Esguerra will also train three doctors and three nurses for the Unity Climb. He expects a larger Filipino contingent to watch over—15 members, 10 of whom will go all the way up from the Nepalese and Tibetan faces. The rest will stay at the base camp. Two big medical tents, both surgery-capable, will also be set up there.

Among the 10 climbers are three Filipino women climbers who will attempt to reach Everest summit during the Unity Climb. Their training, along with the medical contingent's, will start in September.

Physical conditioning

Much like superstar slugger Manny Pacquiao, the Everest climbers, particularly Erwin "Pastor" Emata and Leo Oracion, have been treated like celebrities since coming back. And ever since, the buffet table has always been Esguerra's red light for the climbers.

"They need to lower carbohydrate loading. Diet programs are in place now that they are not yet in full swing with their exercises," he said. He added that the food intake would concentrate more on protein loading.

However, as far as physical recovery is concerned, Esguerra is convinced Emata and Oracion are still at their "optimum levels." The two climbers' red blood cell levels, which would be a good indicator of high-altitude preparedness, are already high because of hypoxic training, Esguerra added.

"I've already asked them to go back to exercising. On Monday they had a 24-hour bike run in Malolos, Bulacan. Their conditioning is still above average," he said.

Hypoxic training

Biking would just be part of the exercise routine. There will be two sets of exercises for the Everest Team. The first set includes jogging, biking, gym workouts, and groin stretching for climbing capabilities (pull-ups, push-ups and sit-ups).

The second set would be swimming and hypoxic training (including breath-holding in water to program the body to function in an oxygen-deprived environment). Part of hypoxic training also involves strenuous biking with nose covers.

Irreplaceable brain cells

The exhilaration of reaching Everest summit does have a permanent trade-off, however. Once climbers enter the dreaded "death zone" (any altitude above 25,000 feet or 7,600 meters), brain cells start to die because of the lack of oxygen. Dead brain cells, Esguerra said, are irreplaceable.

Esguerra was trained at the Western Himalayan Mountaineering Institute in Manali, India

Such is the importance of hypoxic training. As an additional preparation, Esguerra had required the climbers to drink the herbal medicine Rhodiola that reportedly enhances oxygenation to the brain. He said he learned about the medicine in Tibet from Sherpas who regularly concocted it.

Several Rhodiola websites indicate that the herb has also been used by Russian athletes and cosmonauts. Purportedly a powerful antiaging phyto supplement with adaptogenic and anti-stress capabilities, Rhodiola is said to have been used for centuries to cope with the cold and physical stresses of the Siberian climate.

"We are taking the herb (in an attempt) to regenerate dying brain cells," Esguerra said.

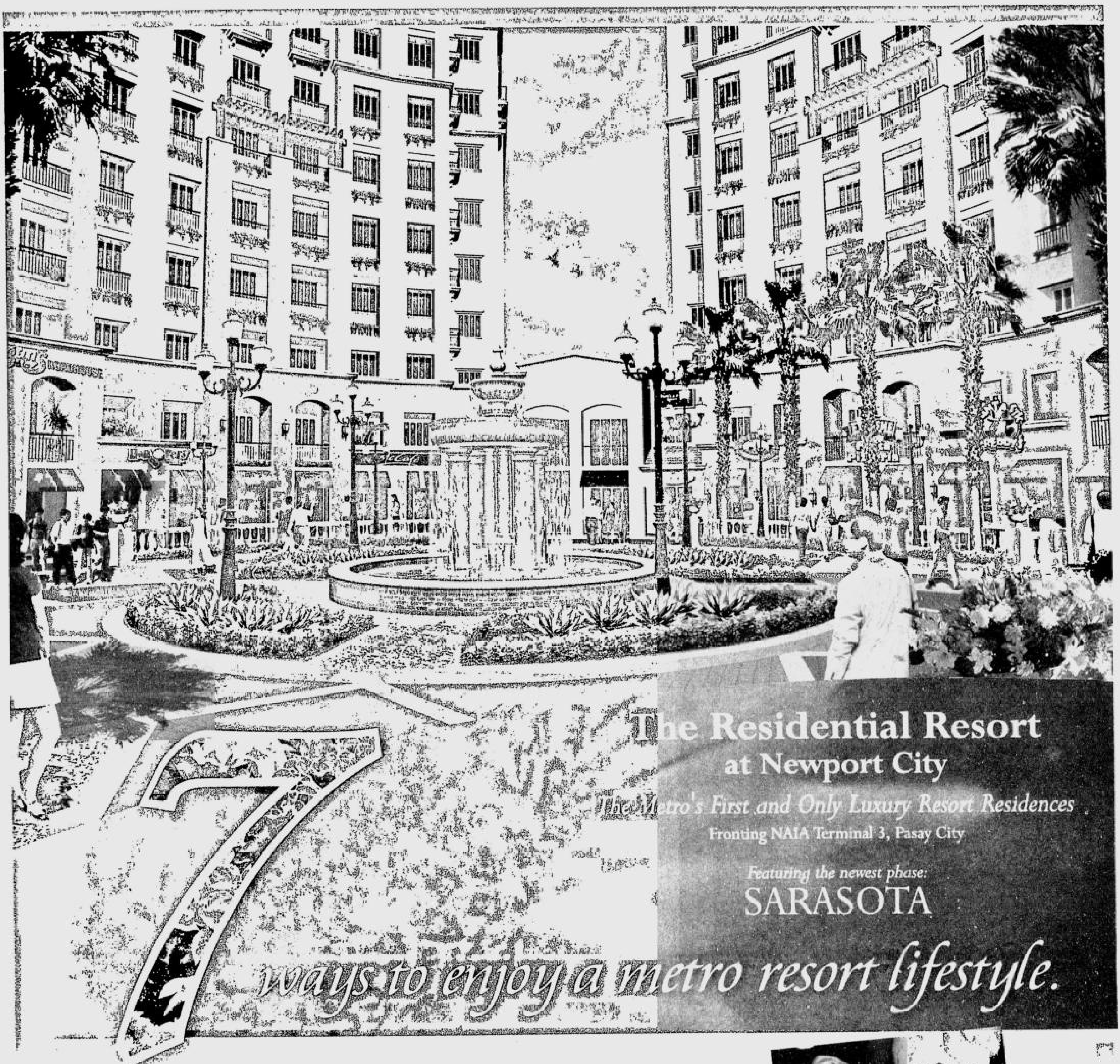
Pastor, a self-confessed Rhodiola drinker, told the INQUIRER that aside from normalizing his blood pressure, his bowel movement became regular and he felt an increase in endurance particularly during his participation in adventure racing, a multi-sports event game that involves kayaking, navigation skills, caving (spelunking), and rappelling, among others.

Coping with high altitudes

Esguerra said his team also takes Ginkgo Biloba, the usual supplement to cope with high altitudes, aside from taking regular vitamin supplements.

Will Esguerra allow one of his climbers to forego with the supplementary oxygen during the Unity Climb? Esguerra said this consideration will depend on their team's climb to Cho Oyu's peak this September. Cho Oyu, in Tibet, is the world's sixth highest peak at 8,200 meters.

"If Leo can make it in Cho Oyu (without oxygen tanks), I will recommend him to do it in Everest, too. Leo wants to test his limits, but this will still be subject for approval of our expedition leader."



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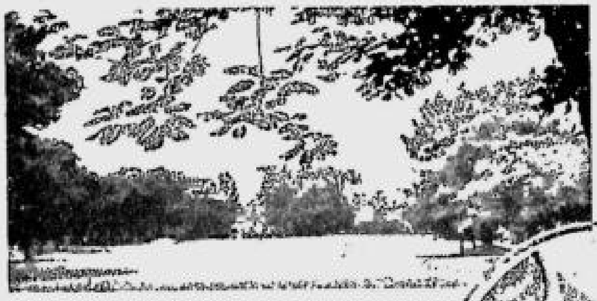

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Dine on the best of the East and West. Choose from casual and fine-dining places—all a stroll away from home. And delight in alfresco gourmet feasts as you watch live performances.

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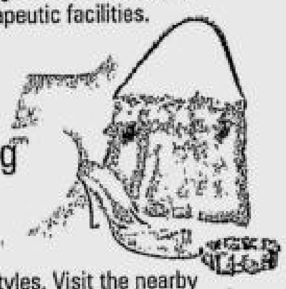

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6

Get together with neighbors at the play areas.

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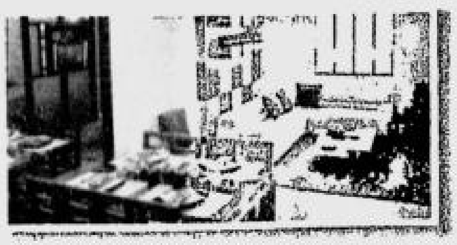

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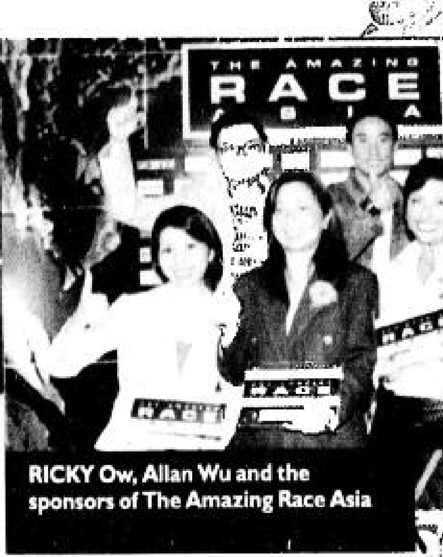
THE AMAZING RACE ASIA
RACE

SCENES from an amazing trip to KL



RICKY Ow, Allan Wu and the sponsors of The Amazing Race Asia

THE AMAZING RACE ASIA

Made in Asia for Asians

My Super trip! to Kuala Lumpur for The Amazing Race Asia press conference felt like an episode of The Amazing Race—if everyone was on Prozac

Text and photos by Pam Pastor

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"You're our subject tomorrow," someone said.

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YOUR NEW PHONE PALS. The Nokia N73 and N72

GET CONNECTED with the Nokia 2610

SHARP SHOOTERS: The 6275i and 2875 are two of Nokia's [illegible]

TALK TO ME: The Nokia 6080 [illegible]

PHONETICS. The Nokia 2875i and 6175i

FRILLS-

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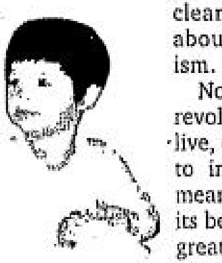
A life less Analog

Age against the machine



Gino de la Paz

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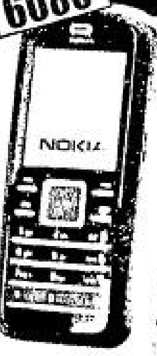
6275i



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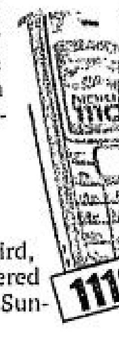
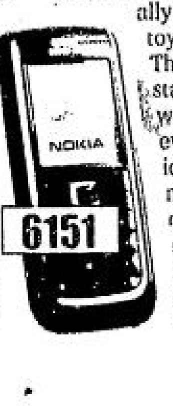


1110i



6151

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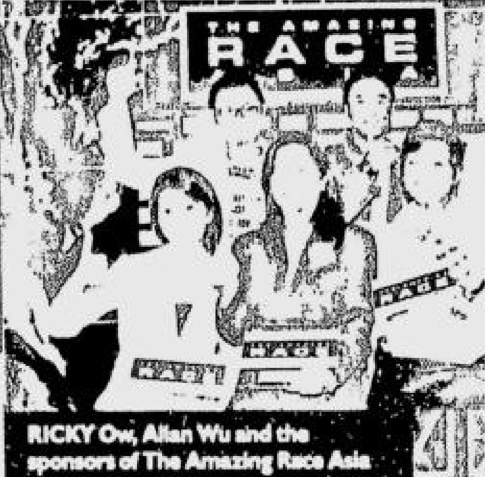
SCENES from an amazing trip to KL



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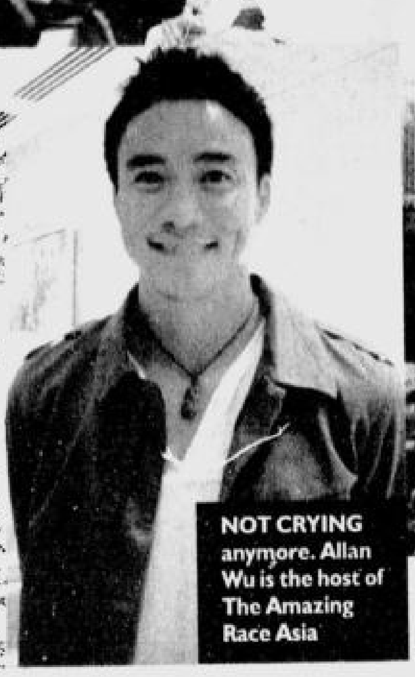
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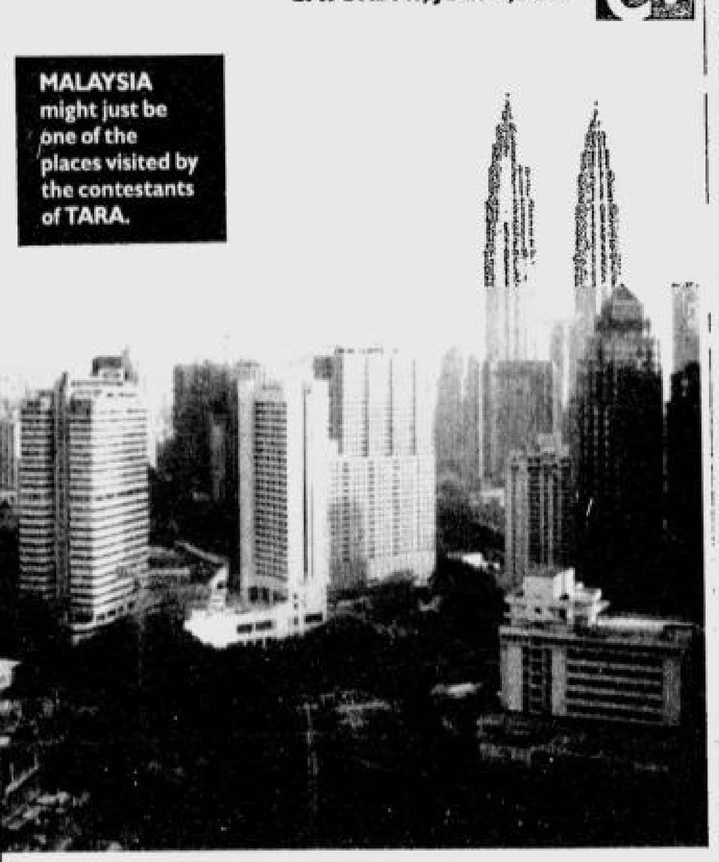
MALAYSIA might just be one of the places visited by the contestants of TARA.

now. You can help by telling them end me tapes anymore," he said,

said that the entries were impresd a lot of them were professionally Many of them did things I cannot ," he said. Some kneeled and some stripped and some even Maybe they were trying to get into ng show, maybe they think it's n Idol."

d that the most difficult thing to do ng the whole team that they were do the show and that they were work on it for over half a year. "I ll them it's a mega-sized producit's going to make your life internd you're going to see your family you have to sell it, market it and duce it. It's such a huge producmost to the point of being scary."

eople, less budget

helped that they had the support um Van Munster, creator of The Race, who worked closely with d his team on The Amazing Race was impressed by how much we le to do with less people and less

sponsors were also a key factor in the show. "Without their support, d not be able to put the show to- It wasn't just money, he said. "We ng our vision, our passion. They ed to the show beyond money—it r passion that was really amazing."

The words "passion" and "amazing" resonated throughout the day.

The Amazing Race Asia finished production last month. At the end of it, they celebrated with a big party. "Everybody hugged one another. There was a sense of relief. Everyone was drinking, people were being thrown into the pool. The emotions, it was so touching. It was just like the United Nations, whatever nationality, culture or language, there was a sense of achievement there. And you felt that Asia was united in that room, exploding in one spirit," Ricky said, getting goose bumps as he talked.

The show is currently in post-production and will be aired on AXN later this year. Ricky said, "It is a production that matches the production that you see in the original Amazing Race."

Although careful not to say too much, Ricky gladly shared what he thought about the contestants. "They are savvy. These are people who have traveled a lot. They are very intelligent, you won't find them making silly mistakes. They are comfortable in front of the camera, they can live with the camera next to them. They are very confident people. But the race puts you through extreme pressure, lack of sleep and running around, and then you realize that everybody has weaknesses."

The contestants' motivation is another thing that sets the show apart, Ricky said. "Unlike in the US version, we don't have people who want to win this for the money. That's a big factor. They didn't do this be-

MADE/ C4

FULLER LIFE

Roselie Nonescan, one of Sara Lee's top IBMs, enjoying her grand vacation in Spain.

Sara Lee helped me see the world!

Years ago, Roselie Nonescan would flip through pictures of beautiful cities and exotic landscapes and fantasize about visiting those places. At that time, she and husband Ariel were engaged in a string of small businesses, living in an empty, "rent-free" house owned by Ariel's parents.

Business was good but Roselie's busy schedule prevented her from spending quality time with her family. Hence, she decided to concentrate on her dealership with Sara Lee Direct Selling.

"I chose Sara Lee because the products are very good and consumable, allowing for repeat orders that will provide me with regular income," says Roselie, who is now Sara Lee Direct Selling's second top performing independent business manager (IBM) for 2006. "I knew that because of its earning capacity, I will be able to fulfill my wish to travel abroad."

Roselie was right. Now, she has more time for her growing family. She gets to travel frequently too. "Now I get to travel every year - go sightseeing, do a lot of shopping and eat native dishes from each country we visit," she gushes. She adds that their regular trips have become bonding sessions for the whole family. "We've become closer to each other after each overseas travel." Aside from yearly travels, Roselie and Ariel can also now afford new cars and have a dream house in Batangas.

Now, the Nonescans live a vastly different life. If business was good for the couple years ago, it's even better now with Sara Lee Direct Selling. Indeed, Sara Lee makes dreams come true, painting life with more color and beauty.

Sara Lee Direct Selling Philippines, Inc. is the authorized distributor of prestigious brands that include Playtex, Hanes, Champion, Wonderbra, Just My Size, Girls' Attitudes, Colour Collection, Beauty Touch, Ivana, Georgie On Ice, VS. Versus, Nutrimetics, and Zwitsal. Sara Lee Direct Selling Philippines, Inc. is also known as Fuller Cosmetics in Latin America and Nutrimetics in many parts of the world. If you have questions, need additional information or wish to become a dealer, call 859-3000, or send an email to customer_relation@saraleedirectselling.ph. You can also send inquiries through fax number 867-2279. You may also get in touch through text at 0921-9643367 or 0915 9823471

Nokia launches 5 new mobile phones and teaches the world how to live, connect, achieve, and explore in 2006

FREE. The 1110i is …west entry-level phone

ment that suggested greater things to come for the rest of this decade.

Back at the workshops, I was fortunate to see Mark Selby, VP for Multimedia, n action. He spoke more bout these multimedia omputers, pointing out ow they demonstrate the nvergence of television, isic, the Internet, social vorking, self-broadcasting, information management. observations, he said we t a whole generation of who'll watch (and prot on their mobile devices y are. Happening just 5 e launch of mobile TV, he that we should also anticid to go the way of mobile e peer-to-peer revolution, ready created exciting culnomies among the youth.

about the future made me impler, analog times. Yeah, s, using 35mm film cambuying CDs seem so hopeenient and considerably th today's breed of multines, especially those proa, less and less of our set traditional television and radio. More and more are r computers and handheld ources for customized en-

hand, it could mean scary r old-school media. On the spells is progress, which is much rather focus on. And you think about it, we've ong way from Snake.

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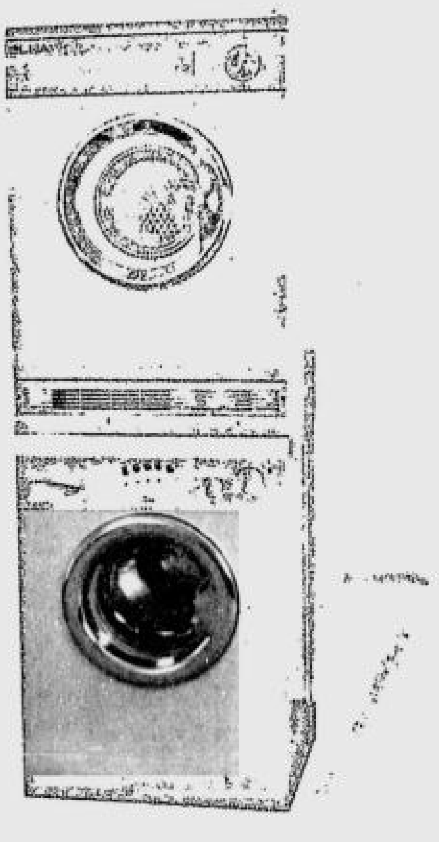

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Activism *n.* State of being vocal about personal beliefs and taking action where change is seen fit

Animalism *n.* State wherein people act like animals

Autism *n.* The state of having your own world

Capitalism *n.* An inclination to start a business despite the lack of money

Carism *n.* An extreme state of infatuation wherein cars are treated like human beings

Chauvinism *n.* Men's belief that they should always COME first

Chenelism *n.* A state wherein people use the words "chenes" and "chenelin" to replace nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs; often confused with chuvanism

Faithism *n.* Having well-founded beliefs in faith, as well as questions to affirm them

Favoritism *n.* A treatment given to exalt or glorify one item from a fixed set or grouping

Feminism *n.* A belief that the female species is equal and as strong as its male counterpart

Garylism n. State wherein old men find their ultimate pleasure in telling green jokes to younger women; see D.O.M.

Gayism *n.* Being proud and happy of one's sexual preference

Holyism *n.* A strong belief in divine intervention and that everything we do and choose to do is manifested through God's "signs"

Minimalism *n.* A belief that life should be kept simple and unadulterated

Miro-ism *n.* *A state wherein one inspires creativity through free expression, dynamism, and the arts*

Monogamism *n.* Sticking to just one lifetime partner through and through

Mysticism *n.* A belief you don't know

Narcissism *n.* A belief that it's the pleasure of other people to meet them

Optimism *n.* A belief that there is always a positive side to every situation

what's your ism?

ISM n. the essence of a person; a personal belief and conviction; a distinct quality in everyone

Chuvanism *n.* A state wherein people can't express themselves without using the word "chuva" in their sentences

Colonialism *n.* A strong belief in anything that is not locally made

Confusionism *n.* A state wherein one has the habit of asking highly philosophical questions

Deauville-ism *n.* *A refreshed state wherein one inspires beauty through purity, innocence, and freshness*

Digitalism *n.* An obsession with digital technology and its corresponding apparatuses

Exaggerism *n.* A state wherein one tends to respond extraordinarily to ordinary questions or situations

Exhibitionism *n.* A belief in doing things for a good cause. .like giving a free show

Huit-ism *n.* *A state wherein men of power and confidence find a renewed passion for living*

Linearism *n.* Possessing rigid personalities and a one-track mind

LSSism *n.* A habit of humming or singing songs that leave a residual effect in the listener's head called "Last Song Syndrome"

Machoism *n.* Men's pride in showing off their own muscles, no matter how underdeveloped they are

Masochism *n.* State wherein one discovers how much love hurts... real good

Materialism *n.* A belief that great happiness is found in material things

Maximalism *n.* A belief that living a full life means having everything in excess

Mechanism *n.* A belief that there is a machine for every task

Patriotism *n.* A strong conviction to love the country you serve under, even if it doesn't love you back.

Pessimism *n.* Being positive that nothing will go right

Sadism *n.* Finding pleasure in putting other people through painful situations

Skinnyism *n.* An obsession with achieving a waif figure

Sosyalism *n.* A state wherein one finds happiness in going out and socializing with people

Superiorism *n.* A state wherein people place themselves above others in social class and consider themselves better than everyone else

Vanityism *n.* A belief that achieving one's ultimate state of beauty is worth any cost

Virginism *n.* A conviction to really stay a virgin until after marriage: usually possessed by convent-bred schoolgirls

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Made in Asia for Asians

From page C3

'cause of that, it's for the once-in-a-lifetime experience. Many were just happy to be selected for the race."

There will be enough drama on The Amazing Race Asia, according to Ricky. "It's a personal journey for everyone. They find their own strengths and weaknesses, there are moments they wish they never have done it, they regret, they cry about it, but they find enough energy to overcome it. Everyone's story is very touching."

Allan said, "When the show comes out, I think you will not be disappointed. You're gonna love it. After everyone watches it, they're going to want to sign up. People are really going to want to be a part of it."

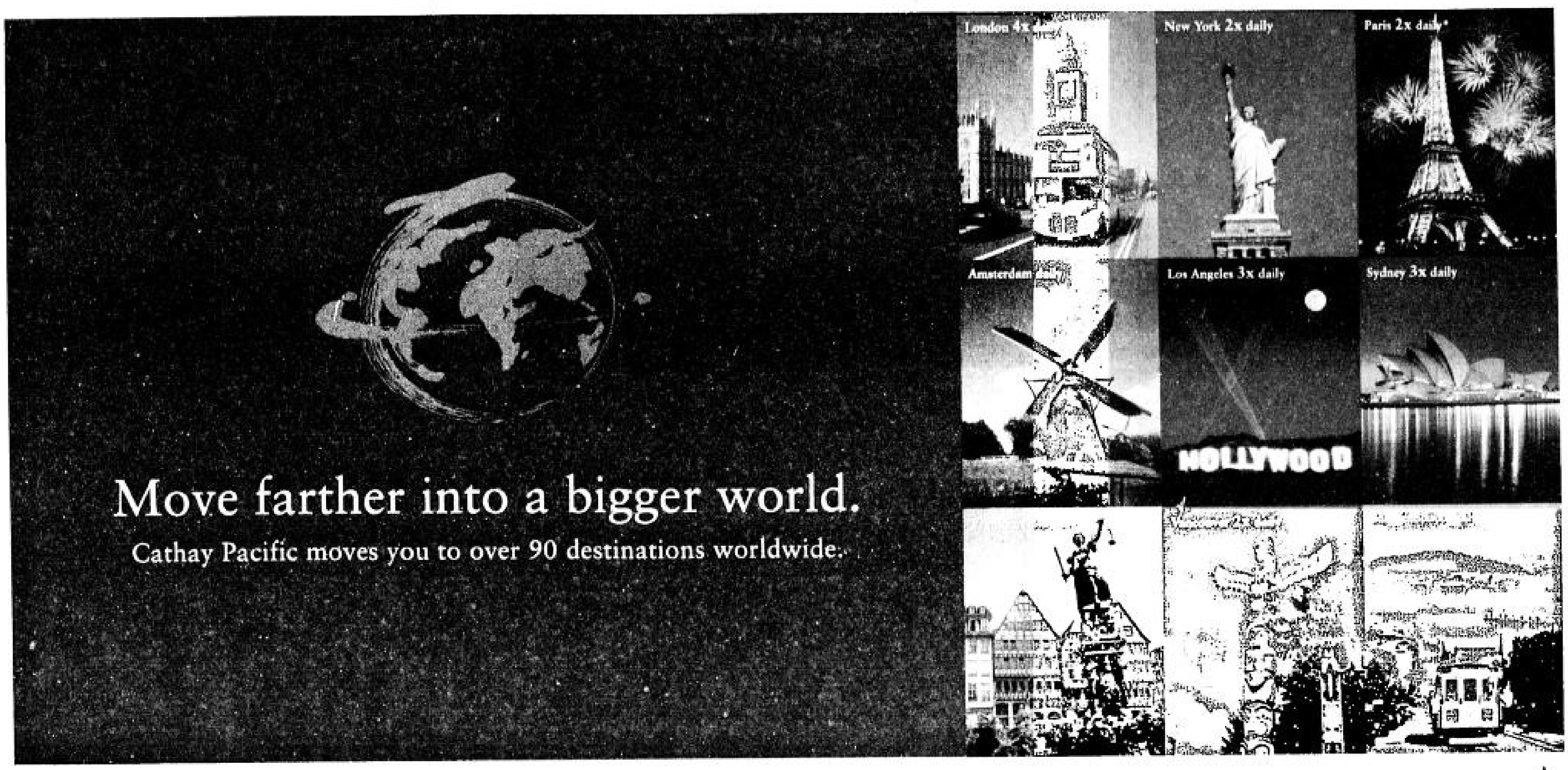
And more people might just get that opportunity.

The Amazing Race Asia promises to be the start of something big in Asian TV history. Ricky hints at the possibilities of another season. "My desire is to give more and more people the chance to do this."

As my fourth plane in three days took off again, this time headed for Manila, I only had two thoughts in my head. "I can't believe I have to wait months before the show starts" and "Dang, I better get started on my audition tape."

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph.

Watch out for Bayani San Diego's full stories on Allan Wu and The Amazing Race Asia in INQUIRER*'s Entertainment Section.*



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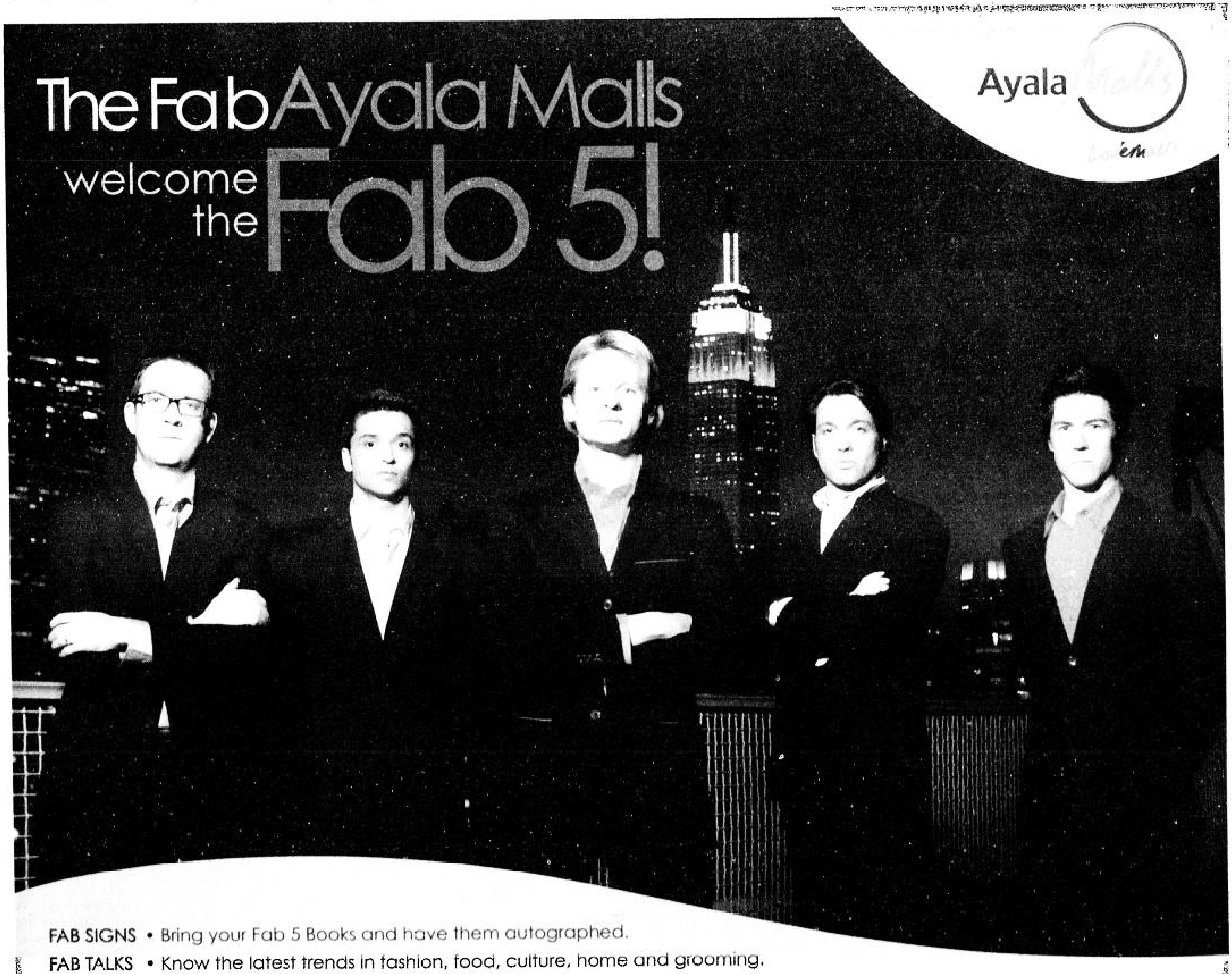

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Activity Center
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glorietta GREENBELT ALABANG TOWN

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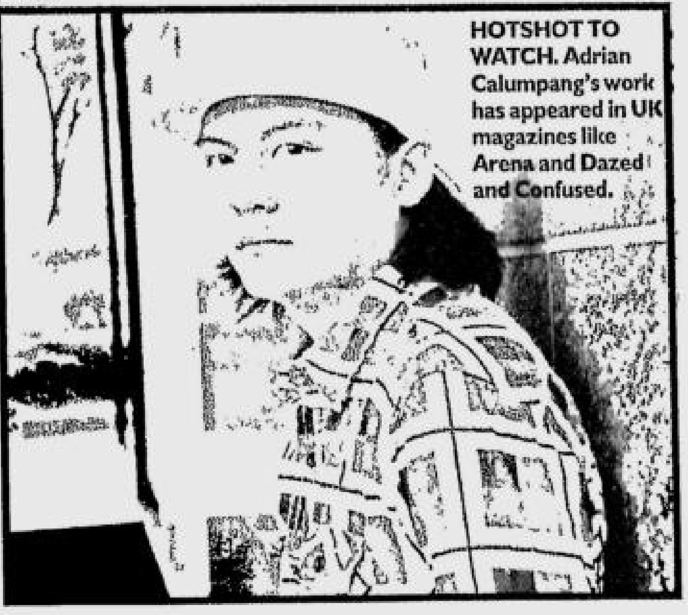
Popaganda!

Twentysomething director Adrian Calumpang shows how pop culture and advertising intersect


HOTSHOT TO WATCH. Adrian Calumpang's work has appeared in UK magazines like Arena and Dazed and Confused.

By Gino de la Paz

BY NOW, THOSE OF you who fall under the student species would've probably—or hopefully—finally settled in and gotten cozy with the business of, *ahem*, learning. Homework hangovers, sleeping-pill teachers, and growing Red Bull dependency aside, school—especially high school—is a chaotically intriguing world. Without it, teen movies as we know them wouldn't exist and peeps like Stifler, Regina George, and even Donnie Darko would've never become household names.

By now, as well, you should've almost certainly seen, hummed along with, or danced to the Rexona First Day High TV ad in all its candy-colored kaleidoscope glory. Directed by graphic designer and hotshot director Adrian Calumpang, the commercial picks up where last year's First Day Funk campaign, headlined by Parokya ni Edgar, left off.

"I was really inspired by John Hughes films from the '80s. His movies have become archetypal of the teen genre," Adrian says. Having designed posters for the youth consultancy firm Added Value while attending school in London, he is definitely influenced by subcultures, including academic ones.

Set to a Kamikazee song, one that became a back-to-school anthem of sorts, this current Rexona advertisement presents the stereotypes you see in school. The only difference now, according to Adrian, is that there's an overlap when one speaks of high school tribes. "Now, a jock can also be smart. Or a rich, *sosy* kid can be nice. When I was a kid, it wasn't like that."

Despite the new-gen attitude, colors still had to be assigned to each personality type. "Since I gave it a monochromatic treatment, it was important to get the color temperature right," shares our director. Adrian admits that in creating an ad—or any product—for the mass market, compromise is inevitable. "It's an interesting process, but at the end of the day you want to come up with something that will help the brand."

If you think about it, youth is a very mature subject. So to give everything an happy-go-lucky, urban gloss, Adrian looked to the modern art form known as the music video. "The style I used was borrowed from Hype Williams' R&B and hip-hop videos. I just reappropriated the concept and made it quirkier with a fish eye lens. If you want to be technical about it, it's called the 2-3-5 letterbox splitscreen."

Admittedly, shooting a commercial project with a bunch of different characters in a 60 x 12 foot corridor was a challenge. "But you can't compare the rewards of seeing the finished product," Adrian counters. "Working with Kamikazee was a breeze since they're energetic guys who are used to being themselves. I think we cast everyone, including the extras, perfectly. It was just like being in high school again!"

And in case any of you reading this wanna make mini music movies in the near future, Adrian throws down a few tips. "Directing a TV commercial involves a lot of problem solving. There's also a lot of waiting, which is necessary to get everything in place and to make sure you made the right decision. If you like that sort of thing, then this job is for you."

(See related story on Page D4)

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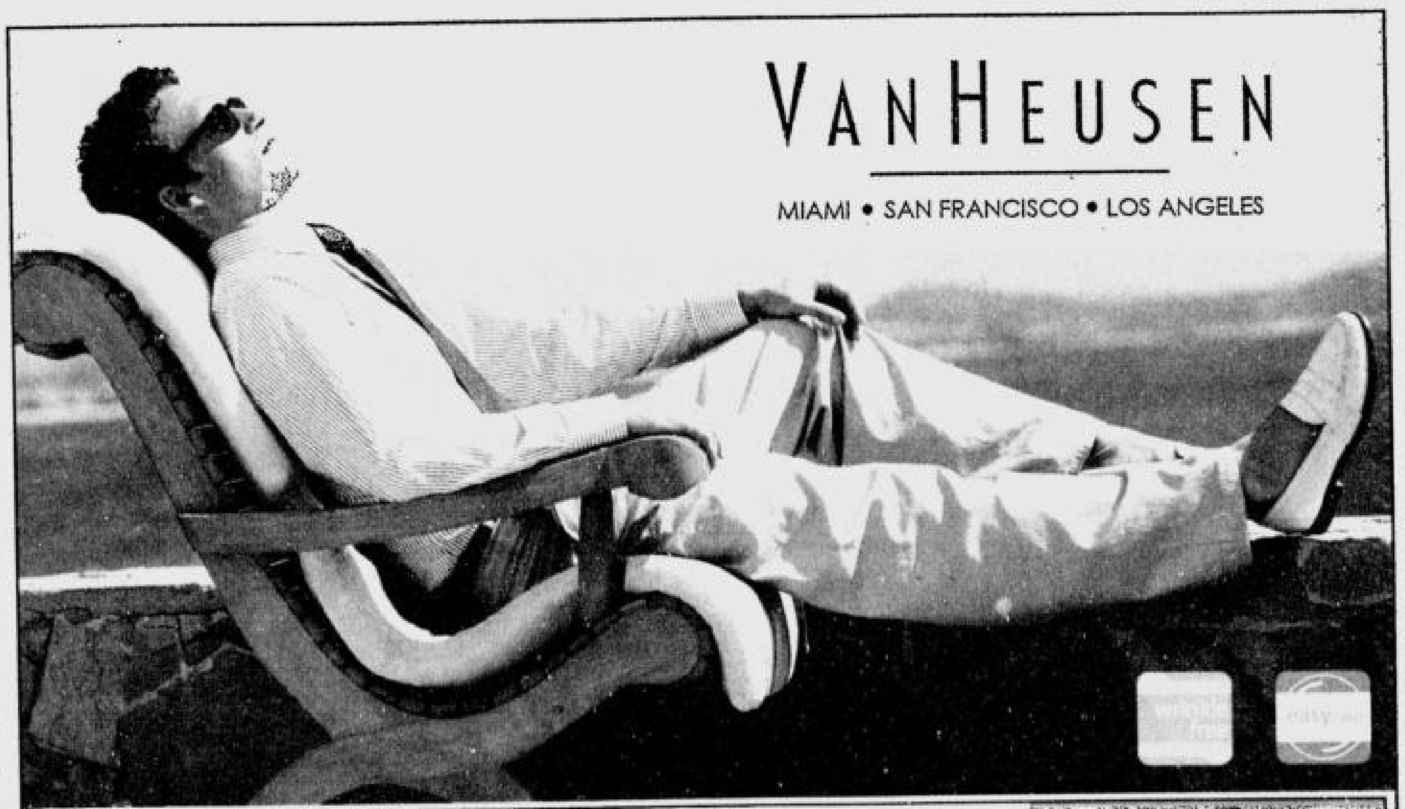
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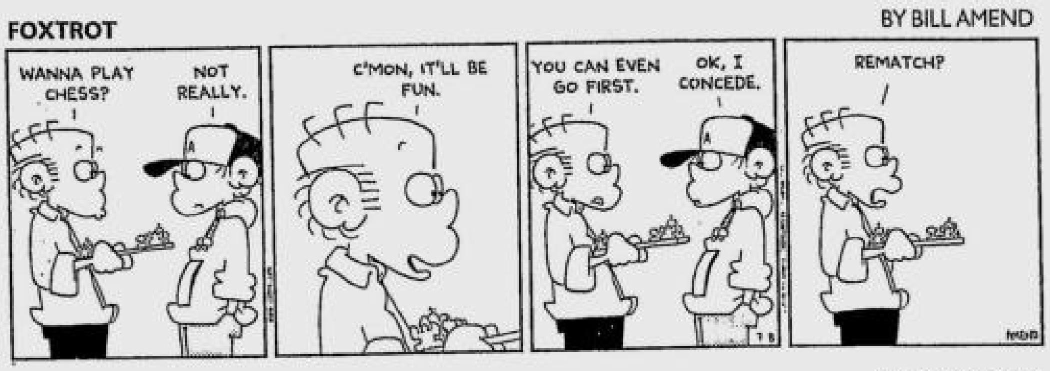
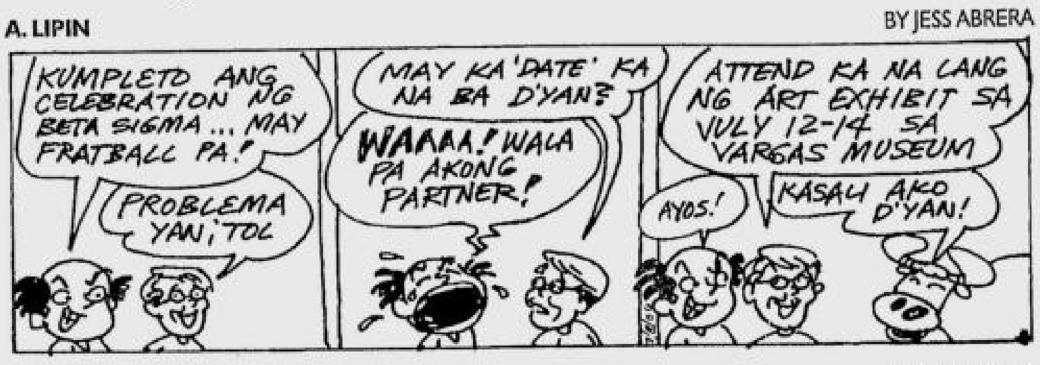
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WANNA PLAY CHESS?
NOT REALLY.
C'MON, IT'LL BE FUN.
YOU CAN EVEN GO FIRST.
OK, I CONCEDE.
REMATCH?

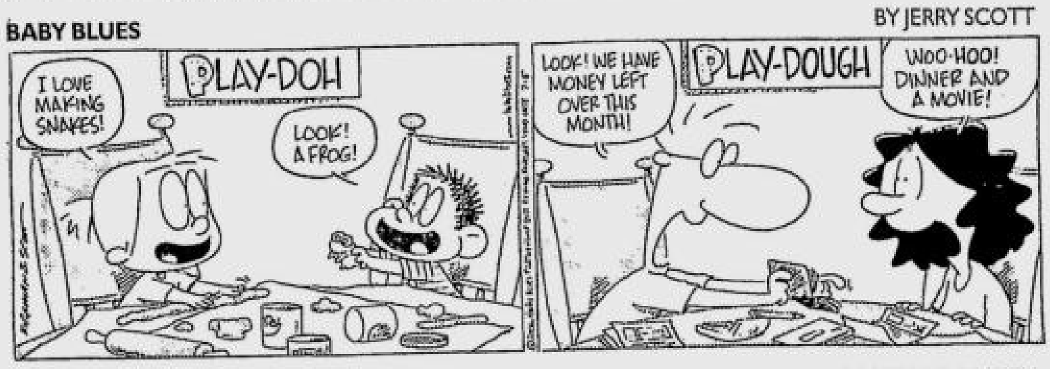
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


KUMPLETO ANG CELEBRATION NG BETA SIGMA ... MAY FRATBALL PA!
PROBLEMA YAN, TOL
MAY KA 'DATE' KA NA BA D'YAN?
WAAAA! WALA PA AKONG PARTNER!
ATTEND KA NA LANG NG ART EXHIBIT SA JULY 12-14 SA VARGAS MUSEUM
AYOS!
KASALI AKO D'YAN!

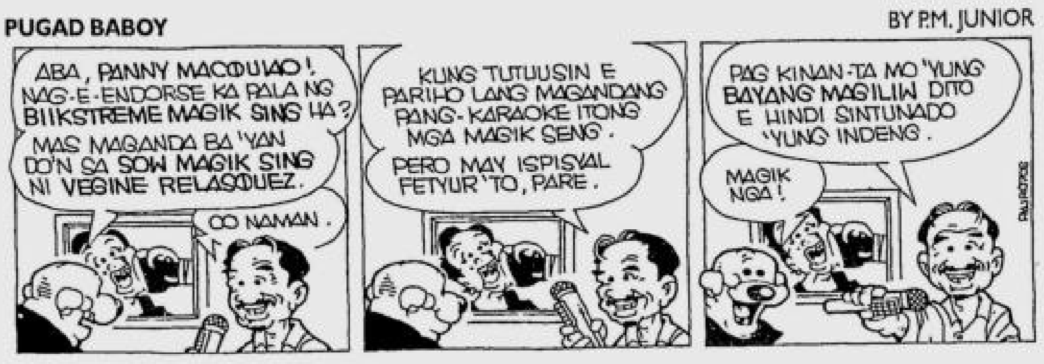
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


PLAY-DOH
I LOVE MAKING SNAKES!
LOOK! A FROG!
PLAY-DOUGH
LOOK! WE HAVE MONEY LEFT OVER THIS MONTH!
WOO-HOO! DINNER AND A MOVIE!

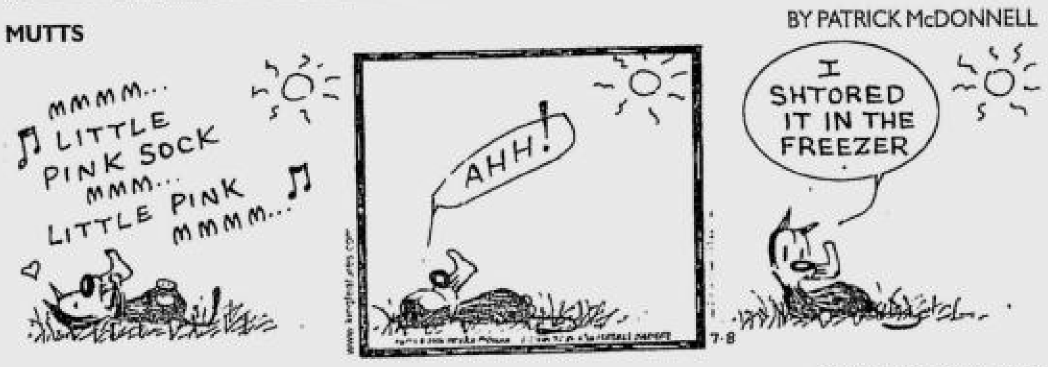
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ABA, PANNY MACQUIAO! NAG-E-ENDORSE KA PALA NG BIIKSTREME MAGIK SING HA?
MAS MAGANDA BA 'YAN DO'N SA SOW MAGIK SING NI VEGINE RELASQUEZ.
OO NAMAN.
KUNG TUTUUSIN E PARIHO LANG MAGANDANG PANG-KARAOKE ITONG MGA MAGIK SENG'.
PERO MAY ISPISYAL FETYUR 'TO, PARE.
PAG KINAN-TA MO 'YUNG BAYANG MAGILIW DITO E HINDI SINTUNADO 'YUNG INDENG.
MAGIK NGA!

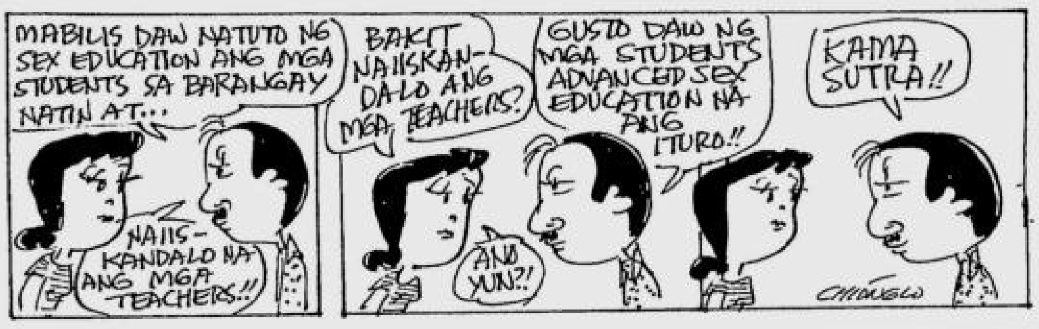
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


MMMM... ♫ LITTLE PINK SOCK MMM... LITTLE PINK MMMM... ♫
AHH!
I SHTORED IT IN THE FREEZER

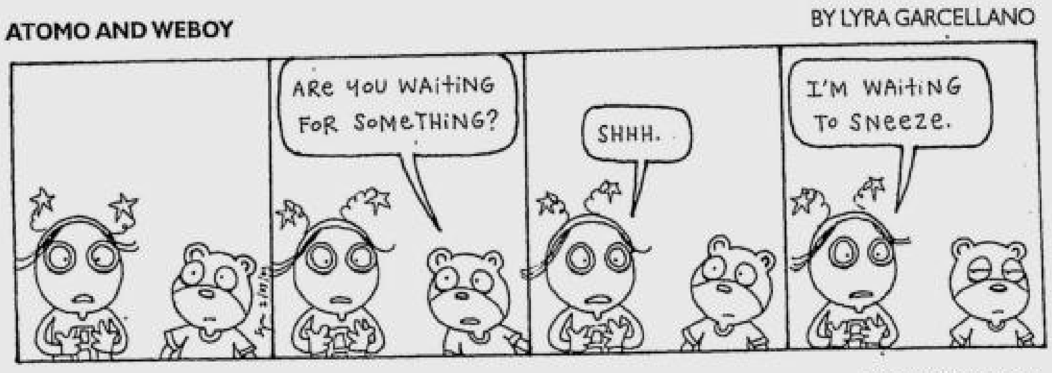
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


MABILIS DAW NATUTO NG SEX EDUCATION ANG MGA STUDENTS SA BARANGAY NATIN AT...
NAIIS-KANDALO NA ANG MGA TEACHERS!!
BAKIT NAIISKAN-DALO ANG MGA TEACHERS?
GUSTO DAW NG MGA STUDENTS ADVANCED SEX EDUCATION NA ANG ITURO!!
ANO YUN?!
KAMA SUTRA!!
CHIONGLO

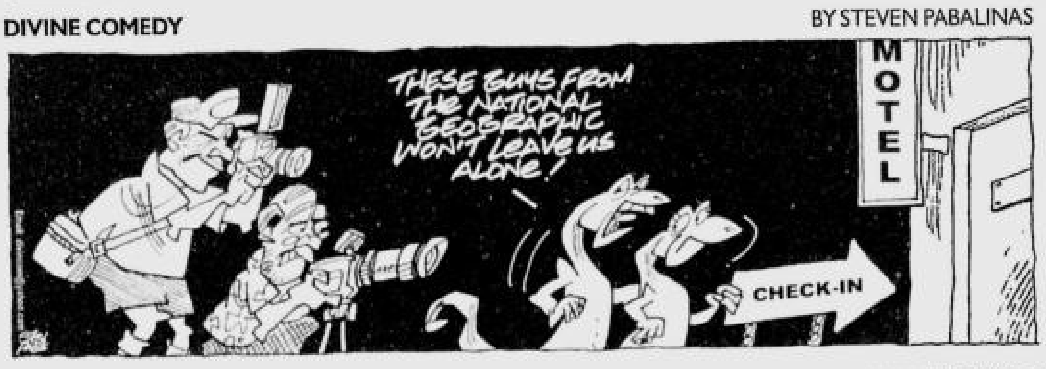
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


ARE YOU WAITING FOR SOMETHING?
SHHH.
I'M WAITING TO SNEEZE.

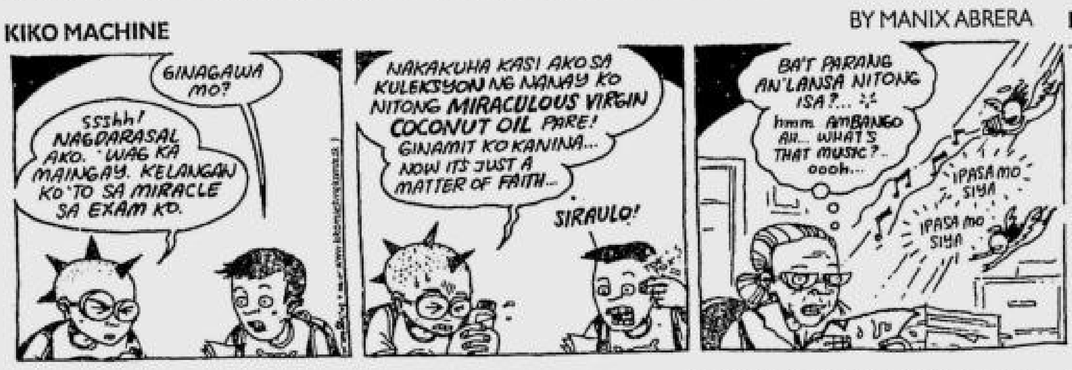
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


THESE GUYS FROM THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC WON'T LEAVE US ALONE!
MOTEL
CHECK-IN

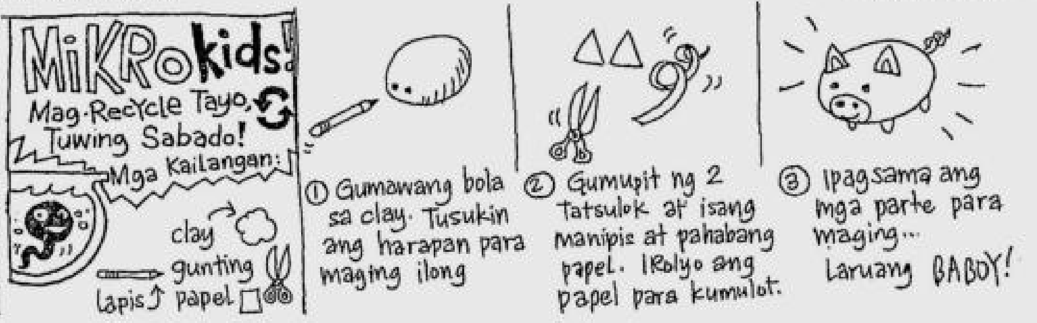
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


GINAGAWA MO?
SSSHH! NAGDARASAL AKO. 'WAG KA MAINGAY. KELANGAN KO 'TO SA MIRACLE SA EXAM KO.
NAKAKUHA KASI AKO SA KULEKSYON NG NANAY KO NITONG MIRACULOUS VIRGIN COCONUT OIL PARE! GINAMIT KO KANINA... NOW ITS JUST A MATTER OF FAITH...
SIRAULO!
BA'T PARANG AN'LANSA NITONG ISA?... hmm AMBANGO AH... WHAT'S THAT MUSIC?.. oooh...
IPASA MO SIYA
IPASA MO SIYA

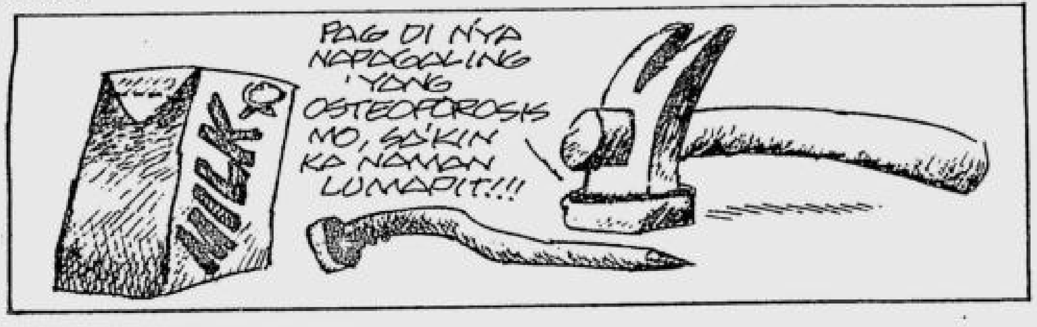
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


MiKRO kids!
Mag-Recycle Tayo, Tuwing Sabado!
Mga Kailangan:
clay
gunting
lapis
papel
① Gumawang bola sa clay. Tusukin ang harapan para maging ilong
② Gumupit ng 2 tatsulok at isang manipis at pahabang papel. Irolyo ang papel para kumulot.
③ Ipagsama ang mga parte para maging... Laruang BABOY!

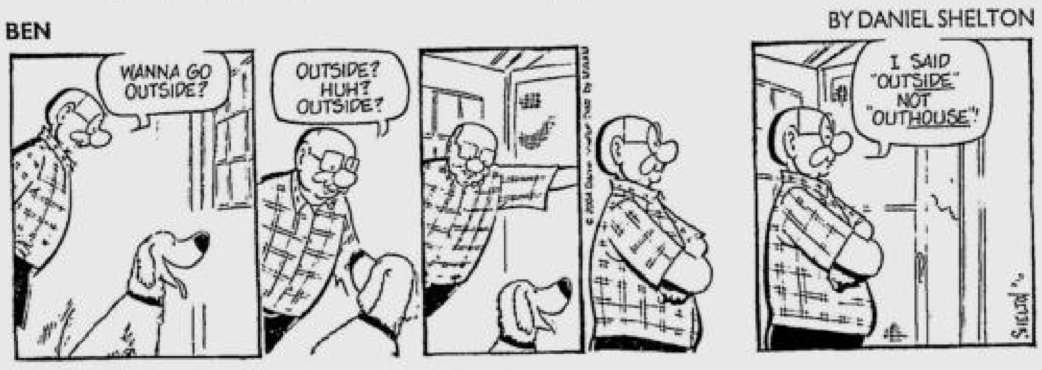
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


PAG DI NYA NAPAGALING 'YONG OSTEOPOROSIS MO, SA'KIN KA NAMAN LUMAPIT!!!
MILK

BEN

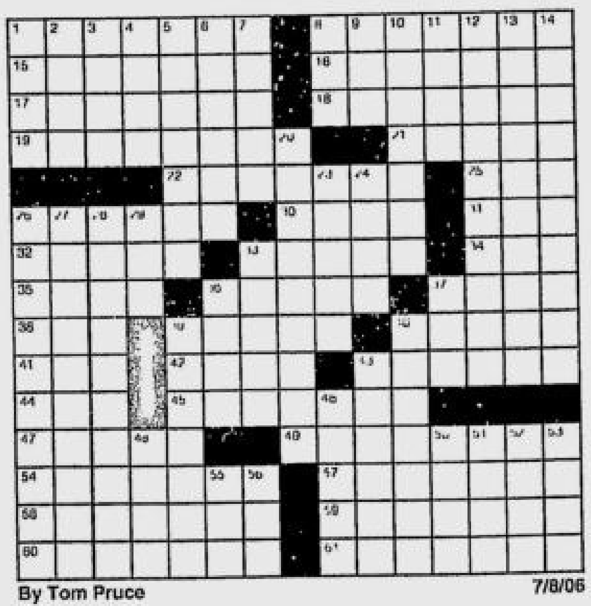
BY DANIEL SHELTON


WANNA GO OUTSIDE?
OUTSIDE? HUH? OUTSIDE?
I SAID "OUTSIDE" NOT "OUTHOUSE"

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Space Needle city
8 Birthplace of Simon Bolivar
15 Breathed out
16 City on San Francisco Bay
17 Perpetual
18 Tenor Pavarotti
19 Off-key
21 Ethical Culture Movement's founder
22 Natural metallic sulfide minerals
25 PC maker
26 Shoots wide
30 Smallest part of a buck
31 Dent or corn starter?
32 Opposers
33 Reverses a deletion
34 Tiriac of tennis
35 Slanted type: abbr.
36 Needs braces?
37 Dunce cap shape
38 Lon of Cambodia
39 Outer garments
40 Incomes from property
41 Ga. neighbor
42 Present starter?
43 Intuits
44 Std.
45 Fastens buckles again
47 Medieval suit
49 Cover with an ice mass
54 Posted leaflets
57 "In Praise of Folly" writer
58 Lures
59 Dependent
60 Loud speaker
61 Ringlets

DOWN
1 Tailor's line
2 Former serviceman
3 Gorillas and gibbons
4 Incline
5 Acting groups
6 Bruce and Kravitz
7 Lawn-care tool
8 Org. of Argonauts
9 Islands of Indonesia
10 Selects new players
11 Surrounded by
12 Temporary alliances
13 "Agnes Grey" author
14 Tempestuous condition
20 Speaking to a secretary?
23 Second decade
24 Hobbit allies
26 Large, powerful computers
27 Narrow-minded
28 Cavern-floor buildup
29 RSVP part
33 Penn and Young
36 Togo's capital
37 10 decades
39 Make right
40 Change dimensions
43 More meager
46 All ears
48 Lena of "Alias"
50 Wife of Osiris
51 Amo, ___, amat...
52 Bring into harmony
53 Superlative endings
55 Classic car
56 Lith. or Azer., once



7/8/06

By Tom Pruce
Chicago, IL

Friday's Puzzle Solved

F	I	E	L	D	■	J	I	B	E	■	S	P	U	R
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7/8/06

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're very capable. You know how to create organizations, structures and systems. You also have excellent business savvy. People rely on your support and advice for most of your life. Your spiritual world is important to you. A major change might occur this year, perhaps something as significant as in 1997.

Birthdate of: Anjelica Huston, actress; Kevin Bacon, actor; Toby Keith, country singer

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Try to do something different today. Vary your routine. Take a different route home from work. Visit galleries, bookstores, museums and parks. Learn something new.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): All encounters with others might be more emotional today. That's why it's best to give yourself an opportunity to have a sober second thought. Think before you speak.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Conflicts with others will be emotional today because the Moon is sitting opposite from you. Be careful that you don't respond to others with a knee-jerk action. (Easy does it.)

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is a good day to shop for sundry items and things related to hygiene—toothpaste, floss, soap or pet supplies. Take care of little things on your list that you've been meaning to do.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You have a strong need to express yourself today. Above all, you want to have fun (and you might want to flirt, because romance is favored!). Enjoy your day.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You'll appreciate an opportunity to sneak away to a private place to have a pleasant, relaxing time. It's a busy world, and it's hard out there without your towel.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): A female relative (sister?) could play an important role in your life today. You can definitely trust your hunches now. You're in the zone.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You might feel attached to certain possessions today. You don't want to lend somebody something. It's just because you sort of identify with what you own today.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): The Moon is in your sign today, and this gives you a great need to belong to others. You want to have cozy, intimate conversations. You feel a need to bond with others.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You might feel a need to withdraw from others today. You want a little peace and quiet just for yourself. In fact, relationships with women could be a tad difficult.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): If you've been meaning to tell a friend something, this is the day to do it. Friends will listen to you today, and vice versa. Contact with others is deeper today.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You'll find it easy to display the emotional sensitivity and empathy with those you work with today. You feel quite caring (even maternal) toward others.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Green

4			7	3				
					4			
		5					2	1
			1			3	5	
	1			5			8	
	9	2			8			
3	5					8		
			8					
				9	7			2

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Difficulty Level ★★★★

7/08

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

5	2	3	6	1	9	8	7	4
6	9	8	2	7	4	1	5	3
7	4	1	8	3	5	6	9	2
2	5	4	9	6	8	3	1	7
3	6	9	7	5	1	2	4	8
8	1	7	3	4	2	5	6	9
9	3	5	4	2	6	7	8	1
4	7	6	1	8	3	9	2	5
1	8	2	5	9	7	4	3	6

Difficulty Level ★★★★

Forget the offside rule, Cebuano bands aren't playing under FIFA regulations

HIGH VOCALS. From right: The Ambassadors' Iping Amores, Urbandub's Gabby Alipe, Faspitch's Henry Allen.

Southside rule

PHOTOS BY VINCENT BOCALING
DIGITAL ENHANCEMENT BY PEPE DIOKNO
MAKE-UP BY GAYL PORTER
SPECIAL THANKS TO
TOBY'S SPORTS ARENA, GLORIETTA.

THE AMBASSADORS are Iping Amores, Bai Nunez, Joseph Agura, and Dennis Suarez. *Faspitch* are Henry Allen, Russell Manaloto, Trick, Trevor Bicknel, and Pacco "Peekaboo" Manreal. *Urbandub* are Gabby Alipe, John Dinopol, Lalay Lim, and John Mendoza.

By Pepe Diokno

LESS THAN A YEAR AGO, I WENT TO Cebu to go to a party-slash-concert. I was looking forward to it cause I thought I'd see my favorite Manila bands play in Cebu. And that, you know, is a thrill. Whee.

You can imagine how I freaked out when I saw the line-up and did not recognize a single act. I felt like a foreigner—people started speaking to me in *Bisaya*, and I nearly ran out of the place.

I didn't, of course, cause the place was packed and I didn't know how to say "excuse me" in *Bisaya*. But I'll tell ya, It was a good thing I stayed.

There's an active music scene in Cebu. You can probably even go there just to see bands perform. It's a scene full of creativity and spirit. They're making music loud enough for people around the country to hear.

A prime example is Urbandub, who Manila audiences are familiar with. They recently had their first major release, "*Embrace*",and are enjoying major airplay.

Other Cebuano bands are nearing the nationwide radar, like The Ambassadors and Faspitch.

The Ambassadors are a fun band and they are starting to make waves in the capital as well.

Faspitch just released their first album, "The Future of Ear Repair." Their "hardcore screamyourearsoff music with elements of hiphop and chill stuff" is steadily gaining a following.

I got to sit down with Lalay Lim (Urbandub's bassist), Henry Allen (Faspitch's vocalist), and Bai Nunez (guitars and vocals for The Ambassadors) for a Super! interview.

Did you guys go to music school?

Henry (Faspitch): No. But most of us have taken lessons at some point in our lives.

Bai (Ambassadors): No.

Lalay (Urbandub): No. We were all self-taught.

When did music start taking up most of your lives?

Henry: We all started getting influenced by music at really young ages, but never really participated in actually music-making until around high school level.

Bai: Yeah, highschool, too.

How has your sound changed through the years?

Henry: We've gotten more conscious of the dynamics of the song and the arrangement styles that we want for it. I see us experimenting with a lot of different things in the future.

Bai: We don't really know how our sound has changed through the years. We don't know where our sound is going either!

Lalay: We've really matured. Lyrically, musically. I think it's just that as you keep making music, you get to know what it is you want.

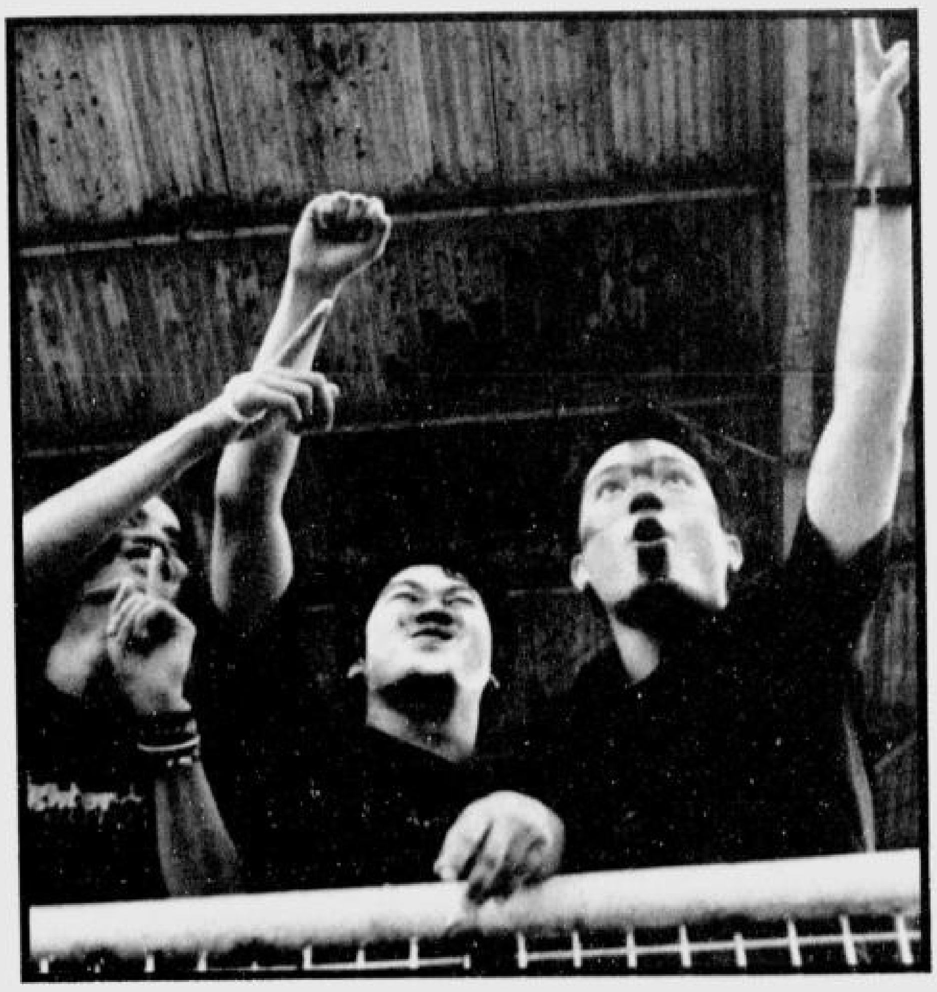
You're an independent band. Is "independence" a concern you have when it comes to signing with a major record label?

Bai: Yes.

Henry: We've never actually thought of that. If such a situation does arise, independence would be a concern, yeah. We kinda like it the way it is now though.

Lalay: Well, we just had our first major release under EMI. We're very happy. We were able to keep our indie spirit. We produced the record ourselves, we got to do it in Cebu. We were just given a budget. EMI gave us freedom.

SOUTHSIDE/ D4



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Cram session

Super cornered the Rexona First Day High 5 and quizzed them on personal highs, lows, and stuff in between

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BOY2 QUIZON

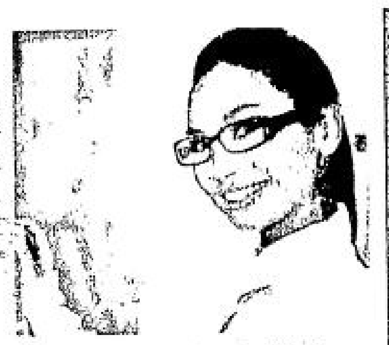
What do you do? I'm an actor. I also have a band called Biyaheng Reggae.

Your most memorable "first"?

It was Valentine's Day and I went to pick up my date in Makati. But my driver parked near a trash site so my car reeked of wet garbage. I wasn't able to make any restaurant reservation so my date and I ended up hiring a cab and celebrated our Valentine's Day in Tagaytay!

A "first" you'd rather forget?

THAT Valentine's Day.



What do you do? TV host for "Breakfast," model

First job? I was a court side reporter for the Ateneo Basketball team during the UAAP.

High school high? The JS Prom because I was voted prom queen!

Little known fact about yourself? I love chocolate! I eat chocolate when I study because I feel it stimulates my brain.

CHARLES LEJANO

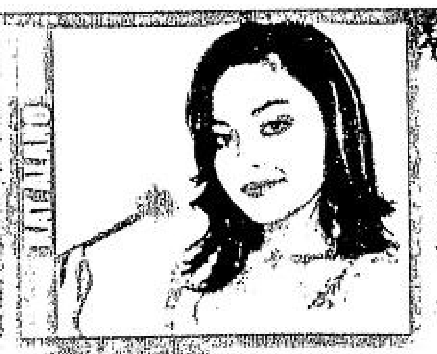
What do you do? I'm a freshman in UP taking up Law

Your most memorable "first"?

The first and only time I was a Dean's Lister in Ateneo. My parents were really happy.

Little known fact about yourself?

I can eat squash seeds real fast, I can move my ears, and I can hyper extend my elbows!



What do you do?

VJ for Studio 23, model, [illegible]

What did [illegible] high school?

[illegible]

Little known fact about yourself?

I've got cute feet and I have a habit of biting my nails since I was a kid but I'm trying to stop.

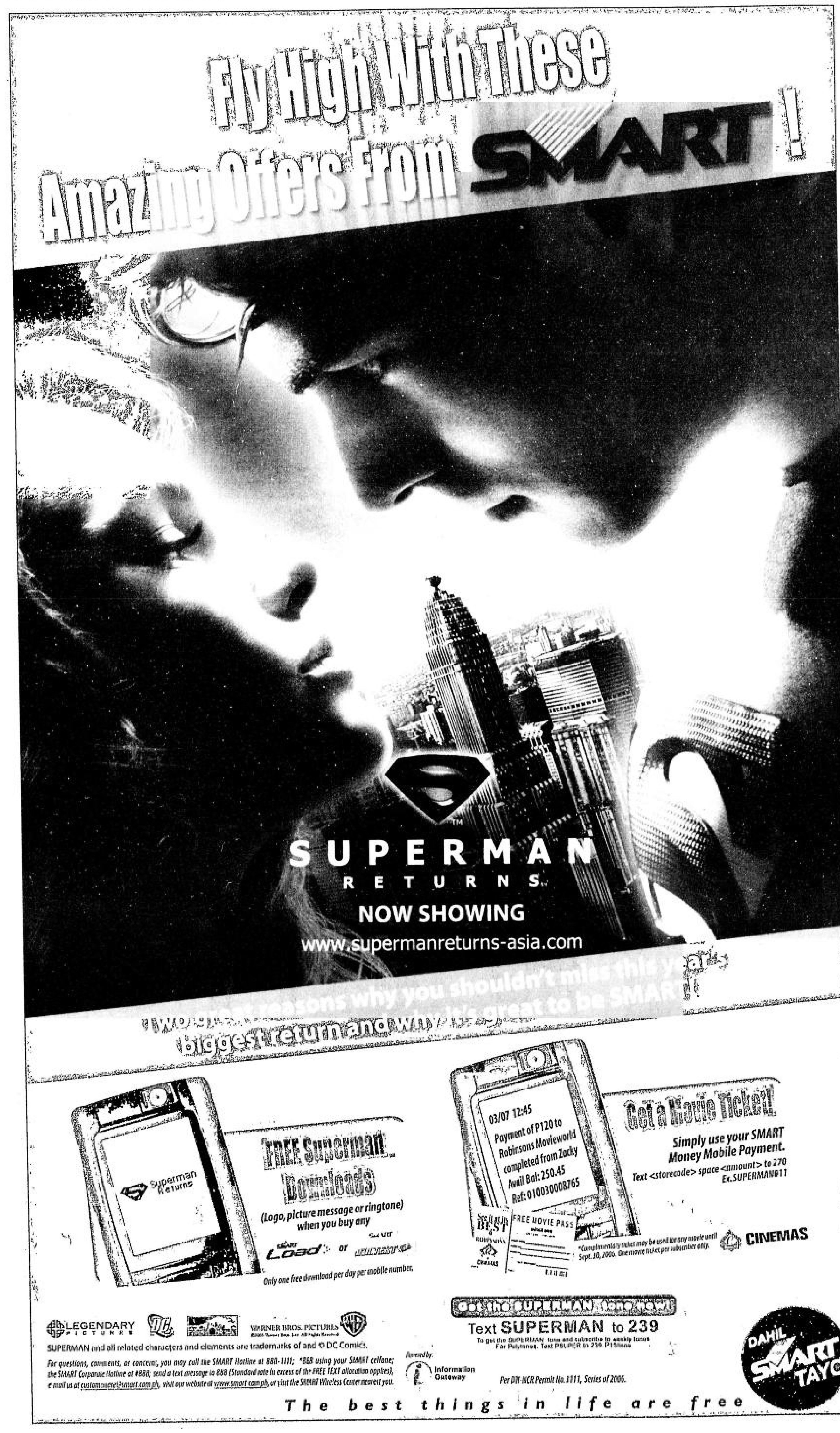
RICH ALVAREZ

What do you do? Professional basketball player.

First job? I was a bagger [illegible] in UP.

Your most memorable "first"?

Winning the college basketball championship. Ateneo never won a title for 14 years and I was proud to be part of the team that finally got the trophy!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The best things in life are free

DAHIL SMART TAYO

Southside rule

From page D3

What's the best thing someone's ever said about your work?

Henry: Whether someone sends me a long-winded message about how nice our album was or just a short "you guys are great" message it's still an awesome feeling inside.

Lalay: We have a group of fans who go to our gigs, and they gave us all shirts! I think that says a lot.

What are the differences between Manila audiences and Visayan audiences?

Bai: Visayans are hard to please!

Henry: I think mostly the Manila audience is a bit more participative. Cebuanos love to listen, its just what they do, they listen to your music and you can tell they are really listening.

Lalay: Manila audiences are more expressive. Visayan audiences are more reserved. But in other provinces, audiences are really wild—I think it's because they're deprived.

What do you think about getting your music available through the internet?

Bai: Online music sharing is cool.

Henry: I think for bands like us, who are just starting out and trying to build a name for ourselves, it's a great opportunity. It's something we can't pass up.

Lalay: Music streaming is a big help. But downloading is another question.

Do you think Filipino bands have the potential to go Asia-wide, or world-wide? What do you think is keeping us?

Henry: Filipino bands can conquer the world! There is so much talent just waiting to be unleashed from this country. I think we just need to conquer that crab mentality many of us have. For me that's the reason many Filipinos, not just bands, have a hard time making it big internationally.

Lalay: I think it's a question of trying. Cause we can do it, we just need to try.

What are the problems facing Visayan bands at the moment?

Henry: There aren't enough venues to play at down here. Bands down here would be lucky to get three gigs in a month, whereas up in Manila you could do three gigs in one night.

Bai: Yes, gigs and venues.

What are the advantages of being a Visayan band?

Henry: Well, because there's so little to do down here bands just keep on practicing. Practice, practice, make music, maybe play a gig or two, then practice some more, that's how we keep ourselves together down here.

Bai: Being able to sing Visayan songs!

What can you say to bands who are far from the "centers" of the country?

Henry: I say just keep on working hard. Believe in yourselves and the music you make and everything will eventually fall into place.

Lalay: You have to keep trying. Leave your comfort zones. Yes, it's unavoidable to leave the place you're based in if you want to go far, but you have to take risks. It's hard work, but if you love music, that's all you need.

What are your goals?

Bai: We're going to rock and roll!

Lalay: Um, maybe just to make it around Asia. That's reachable, I think.

Henry: I want to win a Grammy.

For more information, visit Lighter Records' website at http://lighterrecords.multiply.com

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